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this holiday season

from Martha's home to yours

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decorating

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entertaining

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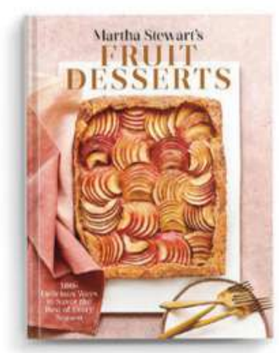
baking



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1. Martha Stewart’s Fruit Desserts Book; Martha.com / 2. Martha Stewart Rectangular Bakers, Set of 2; Martha.com / 3. Martha Stewart 5-Qt. Enameled Cast Iron Round Dutch Oven; Martha.com
4. Martha Stewart Premium Baking Ingredients Kit; Martha.com

Martha's December

GENTLE REMINDERS, HELPFUL TIPS, AND IMPORTANT DATES

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Mail holiday cards	**2** String trees and buildings with outdoor lights	**3** Take dogs on an early-morning walk	**4** Decorate house for the holidays with Jude and Truman
5 Horseback ride	**6** HANUKKAH ENDS AT SUNDOWN Sister-in-law Rita Christiansen's birthday *Weight training*	**7** Finish shopping for holiday presents *Yoga*	**8** Place stakes along driveway to guide snowplows	**9** *Cardio and core* Plant vegetables in the greenhouse	**10** *Weight training* Fertilize orchids in the greenhouse	**11** Make saffron-and-orange-scented seafood stew (see page 79)
12 Friend Susan Magrino's birthday	**13** Give the Frenchies, Bête Noir and Crème Brûlée, a bath *Weight training*	**14** Nephew Chris Herbert's and friend Susan Warburg's birthdays *Yoga*	**15** Begin winter pruning	**16** Friend Jane Heller's birthday *Cardio and core*	**17** Friend Darcy Miller's birthday *Weight training*	**18** Friend Kevin Sharkey's birthday
19 Bake cookies with Jude and Truman	**20** Wrap presents (see page 27) *Weight training*	**21** WINTER SOLSTICE Plan holiday table setting *Yoga*	**22** Bring plants in from greenhouse to decorate house	**23** Take drone photos of the farm for the blog *Cardio and core*	**24** CHRISTMAS EVE Make angel-hair pasta with black truffles (see page 15) *Weight training*	**25** CHRISTMAS Celebrate with family and friends
26 KWANZAA BEGINS Walk around the farm with Jude, Truman, and the dogs	**27** Mail thank-you notes *Weight training*	**28** Launder table linens *Yoga*	**29** Make a batch of orange-fennel-olive relish (see page 67)	**30** Friend Frédéric Fekkai's birthday *Cardio and core*	**31** NEW YEAR'S EVE	

| ON HER LIST |

CREATURE COMFORTS

Come Christmas, Martha doesn't forget her four-legged friends. This year, each pup will get a soft and supportive new bed and a leash. For more ideas for pampering pets, including homemade treats and biscuits, visit *marthastewart.com/pet-treats*.

ANNA WILLIAMS

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MINI SPINACH QUICHE
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Ready to Bake
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WT 6 OZ (170g)
Ready to Bake
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A delightful combination of apples, strawberries, rhubarb and cherries tucked in an all-butter crust and topped with sparkling sugar
2 PACK
NET WT 8.5 OZ (240g)
KEEP FROZEN
COOK THOROUGHLY
Ready to Bake
SCALLOPED POTATOES
Thinly sliced potatoes layered with generous amounts of parmesan cheese, baked in cream with lots of ground black pepper
NET WT 28 OZ (1 LB 4 OZ) 567g
Ready to Bake
CHICKEN CACCIATORE
NET WT 9 OZ (255g)
KEEP FROZEN
COOK THOROUGHLY
CHICKEN CACCIATORE

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From Christmas stockings to ornaments, these simple craft ideas make magical use of the warmest, fuzziest material.

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THE MORE, THE MERRIER
This year reminded us that it truly takes a village. Whip up these big-batch homemade treats for everyone in yours.

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Gather 'Round
Cocktails and bites, sit-down dinner, or dessert by the fire: We have delicious ideas for all kinds of get-togethers.

LENNART WEIBULL (COCOA); STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON (GIFTS)

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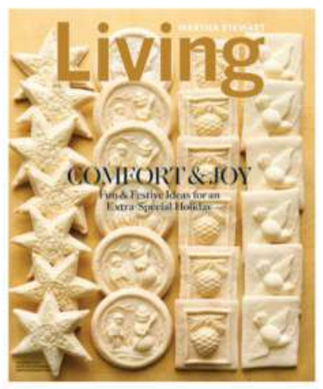

| ON THE COVER |

DELICIOUS DETAILS Intricate, anise-scented springerle cookies are a yuletide tradition. For the recipe, see page 42. Photograph by David Malosh. Food styling by Sarah Carey. Prop styling by Tanya Graff.

NICO SCHINCO (GINGERBREAD, SMOOTHIE); DAVID CHOW (GIFT); COURTESY OF URSA MAJOR (RING)

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The Recipe

START WITH FAMILY, season well with good friends, fold in great food, and pour into a home. Drinks optional. That's my recipe for real holiday happiness—and by now, it's been rigorously tested. After all, this time last year we were realizing the many things we couldn't do thanks to the pandemic, and the places we shouldn't go, and the people we probably wouldn't see. But despite that dismal approach to December, I had my key ingredients (family, friends, food, and home), and the holidays were still super-special. This year, we may be doing more out in the world, but I'm keeping the focus on my formula, no substitutions, please.

With that in mind, we devoted our December issue to bringing you and yours both comfort and joy all month. You supply the family (yours by choice or by blood) and the backdrop, and we have a sleighful of ideas to get your home feeling festive, your gift list checked off and wrapped in style, and your menus planned. Stop by Kevin Sharkey's place to see how he truly decks the halls (page 88). Consider Martha's exquisite pasta dinner for an extraordinary evening (page 13). And don't miss "Gather 'Round": Deputy food editor Greg Lofts offers delicious suggestions for any size gathering, whether you want to host friends for drinks around the firepit or have a sit-down dinner with just kin (page 74). All of us at *Living* wish you a truly happy and healthy holiday, and a brilliant new year!

Elizabeth Graves, Editor in Chief

Let's keep in touch!
Email me at *elizabeth@marthastewart.com*
Follow me on @ebgraves

For all subscription inquiries, call 800-999-6518.

| *LIVING* IN MY LIFE |
Here, just a handful of our ideas that I'm excited about this month.

1
I love home editor Lorna Aragon's DIY ideas in "Heart Felt." This Advent calendar cues up the fun and anticipation. Page 82.

2
Our gift guide has amazing ideas for everyone on your list (including you!). I bought, love, and make daily use of this purse. Page 35.

3
When we see friends in Wisconsin, I'll bring this heavenly cheese dip. For dinner with family, I'll make the seafood stew. Page 74.

4
Three words: *Hold me back*. Editorial food director Sarah Carey serves up divine big-batch treats to make and give to all on your list. Page 96.

5
And Sarah's French toast checks off all the boxes for holiday brunch: It's easy, elegant, flavor-packed, and fabulous. Page 61.

LENNART WEIBULL (CALENDAR, DIP); COURTESY OF A.P.C. (PURSE); JUSTIN WALKER (NOUGAT); NICO SCHINCO (FRENCH TOAST)

PORTRAIT BY JOHNNY MILLER

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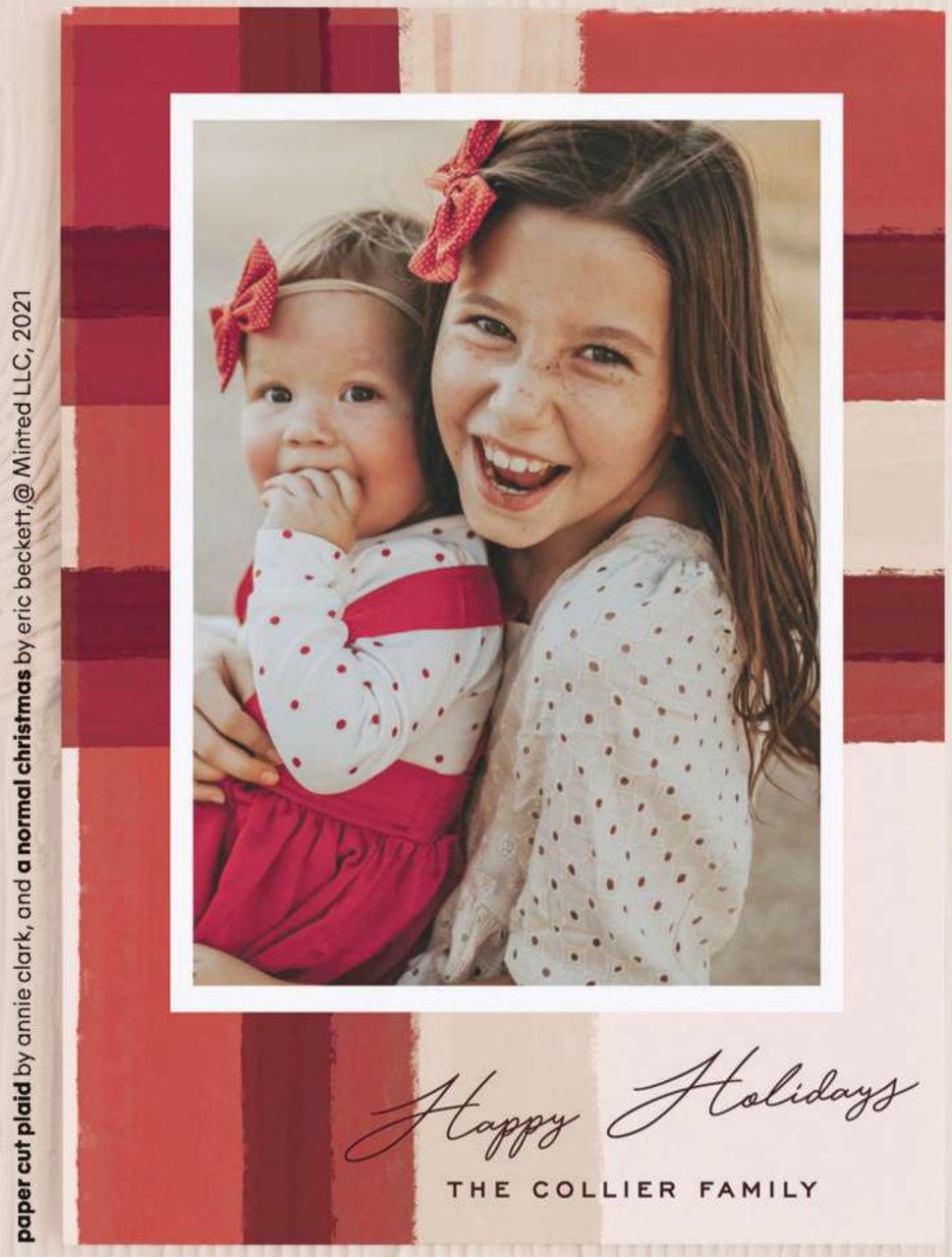
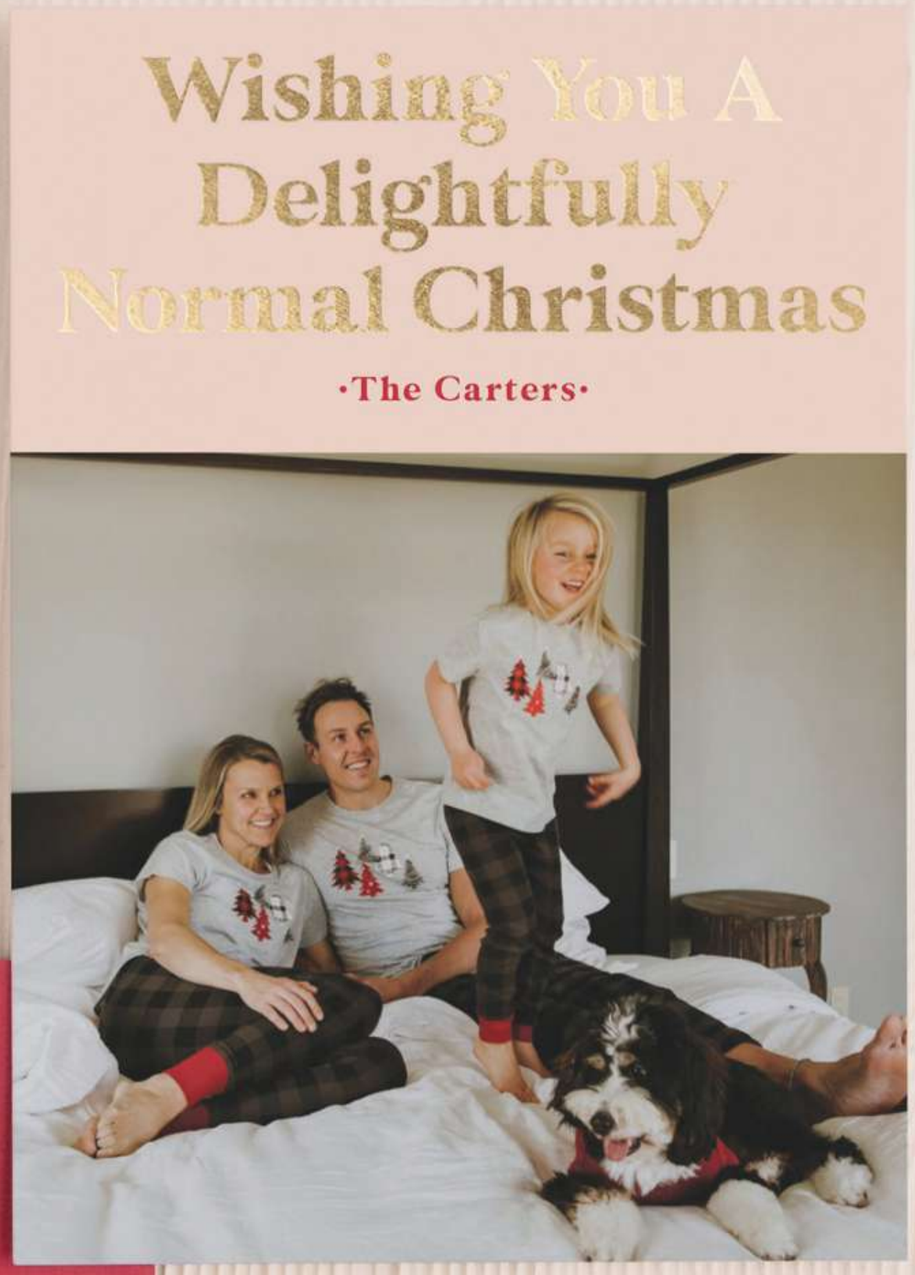
BRINGING LOVE TOGETHER

Artists submit work, you cast votes, and together we create a unique collection to help you send love to those who matter most.



paper cut plaid by annie clark, and **a normal christmas** by eric beckett,@ Minted LLC, 2021



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Out & About

WHERE TO GO, WHAT TO SEE, AND HOW TO MAKE THE HOLIDAYS SHINE BRIGHT

| ON THE ROAD |

SWEET HOME

Switch off the real estate shows and take your dream-house voyeurism in a spicier direction. The 12 finalists in the **National Gingerbread Competition** will be displayed all month long at the Omni Grove Park Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. (A past contender is shown at right.) Or bake your own hot property: December 12 is National Gingerbread House Day.

LAHASKA, PA.

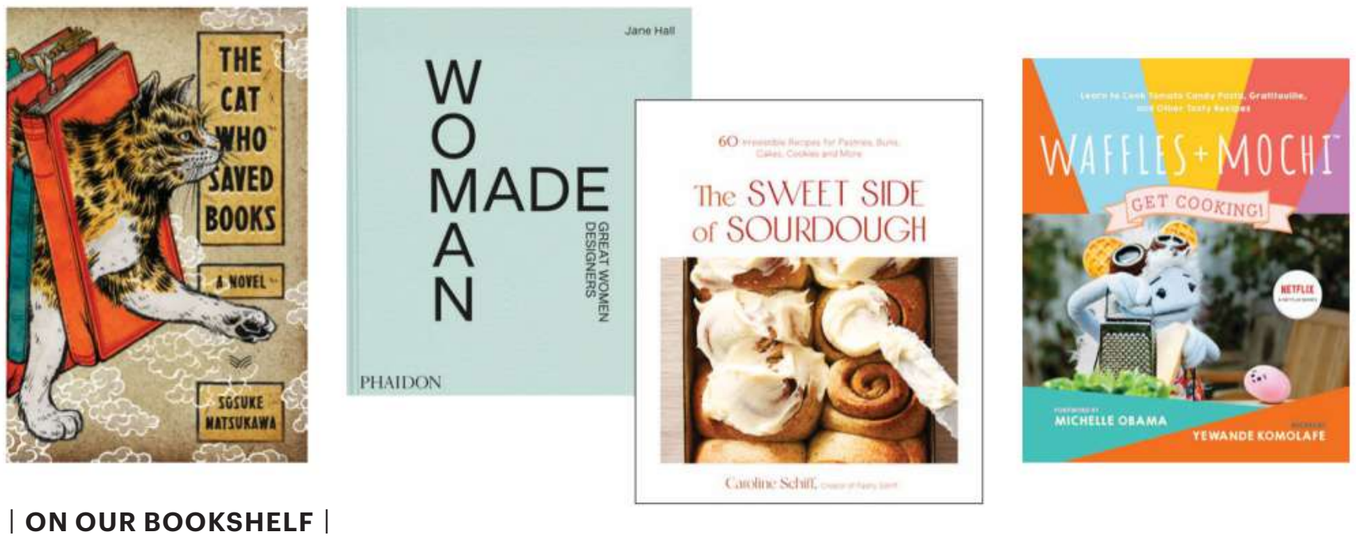
"Around the World," "Movie or TV Set," and "Holiday on Wheels" are a few of the categories in the Gingerbread Competition at Peddler's Village resort. Admire them on-site from November 19 to January 8.

SAVANNAH, GA.

The 20th Great American Gingerbread House Competition and Trail starts with a contest and ball at the DeSoto Hotel on December 13; 20 finalists will be showcased across town through the 25th.

SPRINGFIELD, MASS.

Vote for your favorite build during the 12th Annual Gingerbread Exhibition, from November 26 to January 2 at the Springfield Museums. This year's deeply creative theme: "Under the Sea."



| ON OUR BOOKSHELF |

These titles are sure to enchant a few of the main characters in your life. Give bibliophiles and animal lovers ***The Cat Who Saved Books*** (HarperVia), a magical-realist fable by bestselling Japanese author Sosuke Natsukawa about a lonely boy who learns life lessons from a talking cat. For fans of design *her*story, ***Woman Made*** (Phaidon) catalogs the work of more than 200 female geniuses, from pioneers like Ray Eames to current dynamos such as Nigerian-Canadian lighting and furniture maker Lani Adeoye of Studio Lani. Gage & Tollner pastry chef Caroline Schiff's debut cookbook, ***The Sweet Side of Sourdough*** (Page Street), will lure bakers with the story of how she kept her starter alive when the pandemic shuttered the Brooklyn restaurant—and win their loyalty with her double-chocolate-chunk cookies. And little culinary explorers can learn about the world with ***Waffles + Mochi: Get Cooking!*** (Clarkson Potter). In it, the puppet stars of the Michelle Obama–produced Netflix series try recipes from international greats; kids can make José Andrés's gazpacho and Motokichi Yukimura's omurice (a custardy omelet) with help from their parents—and wise words from the former first lady, who penned the intro.

| WHY NOT? |

Find a Flame

The Festival of Lights burns even brighter at these illuminating events.

Chanukah on the River
A rock concert on the River Walk and a parade of boats with menorahs aboard are highlights of this **San Antonio** festival, held December 5.
chanukahonthe river.com

—

The Country's Largest Menorah
Two 32-foot **New York City** gems vie for that title—one in Manhattan, opposite the Plaza Hotel; the other in Brooklyn's Grand Army Plaza. Both will be ceremoniously lit on November 28.
centralpark.org; largestmenorah.com

—

Chanukah on Ice
On December 2, vintage cars with menorahs atop will lead celebrants to an outdoor rink in **Chattanooga, Tennessee,** where they can skate beneath a giant one carved out of ice.
jewishchatt.com

—

Shell Menorah
A nine-footer covered in shells from local beaches is lit every night of the holiday. You'll find it next to the world's biggest spinning dreidel, on Lincoln Road in **Miami Beach, Florida.**
mbjewish.com

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Note: Dates listed are as of press time.

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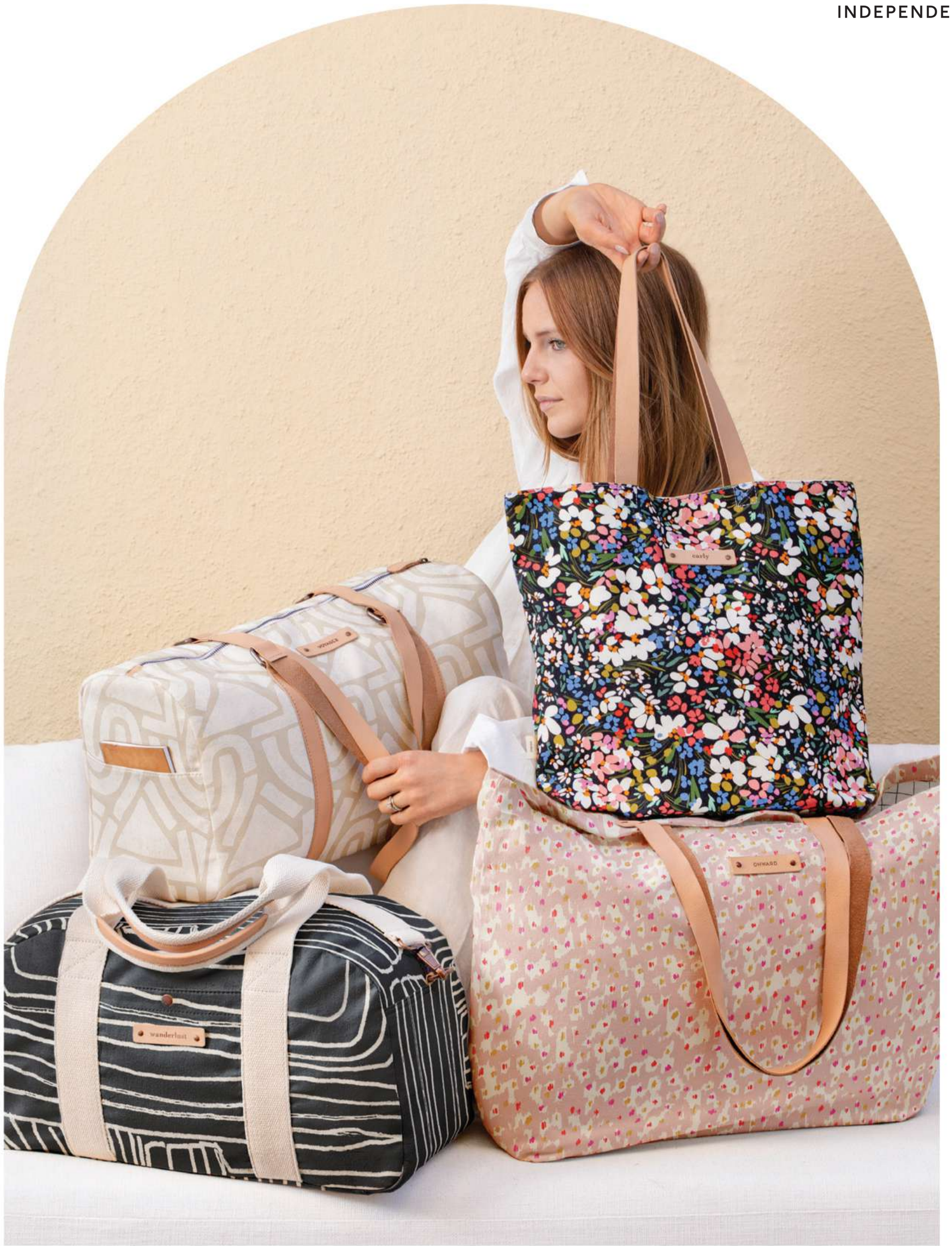
A MARKETPLACE OF
INDEPENDENT ARTISTS



©Minted, 2021 CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: THE FILLMORE DUFFLE in antique by iveta angelova, THE SNAP TOTE in garden club by angela marzuki, THE CARRY-ALL SLOUCH TOTE in animal dots by michelle fifis, THE WEEKENDER in chalk dust by deborah velasquez

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TEACH AND INSPIRE

HEAVEN SCENT Martha warms a shaved, chopped black truffle in butter sauce to bring out its earthy aroma, then tosses it with angel-hair pasta.

House Specials

When her loved ones come over during the holidays, Martha cooks dishes that are simple to make, scrumptious, and, thanks to a few choice ingredients, downright celebratory.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DANA GALLAGHER

SMASH HITS
Below: **Martha likes Yukon Gold potatoes because their thin skin crisps up nicely in the oven.** ***Left:*** **Pomegranate arils are the crown jewels on this mixed-chicories salad, adding a burst of sweetness to the tangy dressing and bitter greens.**

ROWING UP IN NUTLEY, NEW JERSEY, we enjoyed very traditional holiday menus year after year. As an adult, living in Westport, Connecticut, my family loved our Christmas Eve dinner of baby rack of lamb, scalloped potatoes, butter-lettuce salad, and croquembouche. Nowadays, diets have become much more varied. My daughter and her children are pescatarians, some of my friends are vegans, and others still crave a perfectly cooked standing rib roast.

I want to share some of the dishes I prepare most frequently for our family holiday dinners now. Salads are always popular, especially when made with pretty leafy greens, or bitter chicories like endives, radicchio, and arugula, and dressed with a mustardy vinaigrette. A black-truffle angel-hair pasta takes only a few minutes to put together and, I promise, will garner exclamations of joy from your guests. I first had the combination at Babbo, in New York City, where the chef generously topped a heaping bowl of delicate pasta with buttery spoonfuls of finely chopped winter black truffles from France. His tip: Do not forget a sprinkling of sea salt right before eating. My advice is to buy one beautiful, fresh black truffle from a reputable source (I like Urbani Truffles; *urbani.com*) and slice it very thinly on a mandoline or truffle shaver. Then chop it finely and warm it in melted butter right before serving.

Another very simple but ultra-delicious idea is baked potatoes topped with the tastiest caviar you can find (for suggestions, see opposite). Large Yukon Golds, roasted in a 350-degree oven until fork-tender, are fabulously buttery and colorful. Try to time the roasting so they're done right before you want to serve them. A great secret I learned from a Maine potato farmer is to smash each one on the kitchen counter right out of the oven. This breaks up the fibers and creates a fluffy bed for crème fraîche or sour cream and a dollop of cold caviar. They make a wonderful starter or light main.

These meat-free dishes are alternatives to roast lamb, beef, duck, or even goose, and are just as satisfying and delightful. Whatever you serve, I hope you can share it with your loved ones, and I wish you all a very happy holiday.

MAKEUP BY DAISY TOYE

Angel-Hair Pasta With Black Truffles

- **8 ounces angel-hair pasta or thin spaghetti**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **3 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- **1 black truffle (about 1 ounce), thinly sliced, then chopped (a scant ½ cup)**
- **Sea salt, for serving**

1. Cook pasta in a large pot of generously salted boiling water until al dente, about 2 minutes less than package instructions. Reserve ½ cup pasta water; drain.

2. Melt butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add truffle and cook until fragrant. Add pasta and ¼ cup reserved pasta water. Simmer, tossing a few times, until sauce evenly coats pasta. Season with kosher salt and pepper.

3. Divide pasta among serving plates, sprinkle with sea salt, and serve immediately.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 15 MIN.
SERVES: 2 AS A MAIN COURSE, OR 4 AS AN APPETIZER

Mixed Chicories With Vinaigrette

- **2 tablespoons unseasoned rice vinegar**
- **1 teaspoon Dijon mustard**
- **Pinch of sugar**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **8 cups mixed chicories, such as radicchio rosso di Treviso, radicchio Castelfranco, and red and white endives**
- **¼ cup pomegranate arils, for serving (optional)**

In a large bowl, whisk together vinegar, mustard, and sugar; season with salt and pepper. Slowly add oil, whisking until fully blended. Add chicories and toss to combine; season. Serve, sprinkled with pomegranate arils.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN. | **SERVES:** 6

Good Eggs

Here are a few kinds of roe Martha likes. Store unopened tins in the refrigerator until just before serving on ice, and use a non-metallic spoon, like mother-of-pearl, which won't alter the flavor.

ROE CAVIAR
Farm-raised in Northern California, this small black variety from white sturgeon tastes buttery and nutty, with a light burst of saltiness.
roecaviar.com

RUSS & DAUGHTERS
The century-old shop offers a wide variety, including wild-harvested Alaskan salmon roe, which is more affordable than sturgeon. The big orange pearls give a pleasant, briny pop with each bite.
russanddaughters.com

BLACK RIVER CAVIAR
Based in Uruguay, this company is the first of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere, producing roe from sustainably harvested, farm-raised Russian osetra sturgeon.
blackrivercaviar.com

PETROSSIAN
Since 1920, this boutique has been offering an extensive catalog of top-quality caviars.
petrossian.com

Baked Potatoes With Crème Fraîche and Caviar

- **6 Yukon Gold or russet potatoes, scrubbed**
- **Kosher salt**
- **Crème fraiche and best-quality caviar and/or salmon roe, for serving**

1. Preheat oven to 350° with a rack in center. Bake potatoes directly on rack until darkened slightly, beginning to wrinkle, and easily pierced with the tip of a knife, 1 to 1½ hours (depending on size).

2. Working one at a time, immediately wrap potatoes in a clean kitchen towel and slam down onto a countertop (this ensures a light, fluffy texture). Slash potatoes to open, season, and top generously with dollops of crème fraîche and scoops of caviar. Serve immediately.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 1 HR. 35 MIN. | **SERVES:** 6

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Good THINGS

FRESH IDEAS TO ELEVATE THE EVERYDAY

| CELEBRATE |

Silver Belles

If pine trees are Mother Nature's Christmas gifts, seedpods are her stocking stuffers. To fashion a forestful of easy and arresting ornaments, just spray an assortment—pinecones, poppy pods, acorns, plus other natural beauties, like sponge mushrooms—with gleaming metallic paint. Add hooks, and they'll dazzle in your home, or a lucky recipient's. For the detailed how-to, see page 110.

TEXT BY LISA BUTTERWORTH STYLING BY NAOMI DEMAÑANA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICO SCHINCO

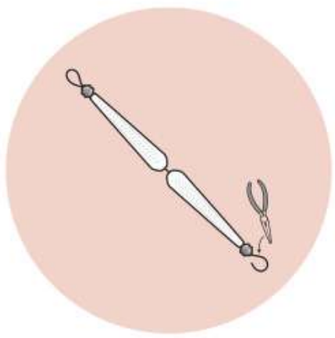
| COLLECTING |

Glass From the Past

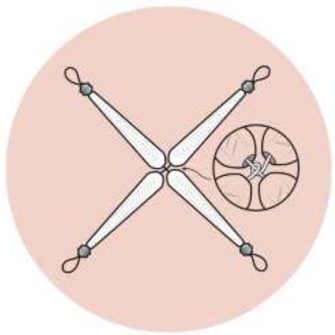
These colorful garlands have the charm of old-world heirlooms, but none of the handle-with-kid-gloves preciousness. The blown-glass beads—which come in loads of shiny shapes, sizes, and colors—have been handmade in what is now the Czech Republic since the 13th century. You'll find vintage ones on Etsy, eBay, and in antiques shops, but they're still being produced using Victorian-era molds, and a set of six to nine (old or new) can cost less than five dollars. Choose your favorites, add fishing wire and patience, and string together some memories for future generations.

Star of Wonder

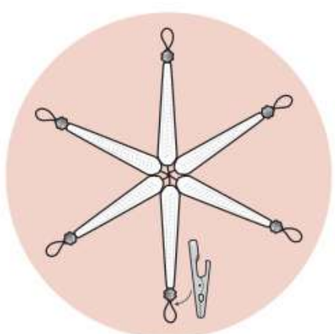
To craft a celestial tree topper, follow our light-speed steps.



1. STRING SOME ON
Thread a round bead, two 2.5-to-3-inch-long tubes, and another round one onto a length of 20-gauge wire. Close one end by bending wire into a loop with needle-nose pliers; cut wire and loop second end.



2. CROSS YOUR WIRES
Repeat step 1 with a second length of wire, then twist that piece around center of first beaded wire to form an X.



3. COMPLETE THE BURST
Repeat step 1, then twist third beaded strip around center of X. Wire one point to an alligator clip and attach to tree.

THE DETAILS: 32° North Czech glass beads, *in assorted colors, sizes, and shapes, from $4 a set, vintage-ornaments.com.*

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER ARDITO (ORNAMENTS); FOOD STYLING BY SARAH CAREY

THE DETAILS: Dennis Bauer feather Christmas tree *(similar to shown), 42", $366, hometraditions.com.* **Threesuns wooden gnome peg-doll set,** *$13 for 6;* **Famgift natural blank wooden ornaments,** *$10 for 20;* **Lranfow natural wooden-mushroom set,** *$13 for 16;* **Pllieay very large assorted pom-poms,** *2", $11 for 60; and* **Acerich chenille pipe cleaners,** *12", $9 for 300, amazon.com.*

| DIY DÉCOR |

A Twee Tree

Let kids follow Charlie Brown's lead and tend to their own little *tannenbaum.* Set up a feathered sapling in their room, and hang baubles you can make together. Add "candy canes"—essentially two colors of pipe cleaners twisted together, cut in half, and bent at the tips. For shatterproof balls, feed a pipe cleaner through the center of a pom-pom, fold the end into a tiny loop to hold it in place, and create a large top loop. Or affix eye-hook screws to wooden figures they can paint—trees, mushrooms, gnomes—for kid-friendly ornaments in a pretty and (*shhh!*) parent-friendly palette.

| RECIPE REMIX |

PEPPERMINT TWIST

Here's a scrumptious treat for the vegans on your list. It's rich and smooth, but the creaminess in this dairy-free pudding comes from cashews, not custard. Just soak, drain, and blend the nuts with cocoa powder, maple syrup, plant-based milk, and melted chocolate until silky. Spoon into cups and chill 30 minutes, then serve, topped with vegan yogurt and crushed candy canes.

Vegan Chocolate Pudding

Soak 1½ cups **raw cashews** (7 ounces) in cold water in the refrigerator overnight. Drain and transfer to a food processor or high-powered blender with 3 tablespoons **natural cocoa powder,** ¾ cup **unsweetened plant-based milk,** ¼ cup **pure maple syrup,** 1 teaspoon **pure vanilla extract,** 3 ounces melted **semi-sweet chocolate,** and a pinch of **kosher salt.** Blend until creamy and smooth, about 1 minute. Divide among 4 to 6 small glasses; cover and refrigerate at least 30 minutes and up to 2 days. Bring to room temperature before adding **vegan yogurt** and crushed **candy canes** to serve.

Nifty Nibbles

Prep your pantry for party season (drop-in guests included) with specialty eats our food editors love.

HEARTY CRACKERS
Made with whole grains and packed with seeds, **Norwegian Baked Sea Salt Knekkebrod** is satisfyingly nutty and easily hoists dips or cheese.
$10, mercato.com.

CURED MEAT
An addictive addition to a charcuterie spread, **La Quercia Salami Americano** is subtly flavored with garlic and black pepper.
$25 for 1 lb., laquerciashop.com.

BRINY BITES
Broccoli Friarielli di Napoli—broccoli rabe marinated with garlic, chile pepper, and white-wine vinegar—adds punch to an antipasti plate.
$14 for 6.7 oz., gustiamo.com.

FOOD STYLING BY SARAH CAREY; PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (PACKAGED FOODS)

| EASY ENTERTAINING |

App-y Holidays

Humans can't live on cookies and cocktails alone. These substantial yet celebratory snacks complement a bevy of sips—and will ensure that no one at your gathering imbibes on an empty stomach. **1.** Puffed corn is a twist on cereal mix; it's baked in a sweet-and-spicy blend of butter, apple-cider vinegar, and maple syrup, with dashes of rosemary and cayenne. **2.** Candied mixed nuts spiced with sugar, cinnamon, and pepper get an extra hit of warming spices from the addition of Angostura bitters, which you whip with egg whites and stir into the nuts before baking. **3.** Guests can roll skewered feta in sumac, sesame seeds, and flaky sea salt for cheese bites worth "cheers"-ing. For the recipes, turn to page 103.

LAYER UP FOR THE HOLIDAYS.

Stouffer's®

HAPPYFULL HOLIDAYS

SCAN FOR HOLIDAY GIFTS.

| QUICK CRAFT |

Spin It to Win It

No need to make one out of clay. These dreidels are easy to DIY, and color-blocking gives them a mod, um, spin. Paint square wooden tops in a brighter take on traditional blue-and-gold using a flat-edge brush and craft paint. For flawless lines, tape off half of each side either vertically or horizontally before painting, or alternate for a little variety. Let dry; write the Hebrew letters *nun, gimel, he,* and *shin*—one on each side—with a white paint pen; and give them a whirl.

THE DETAILS: The Dreidel Company unfinished wooden dreidels, *3", $15 for 10, dreidelcompany.com.* **Woodpeckers unfinished wooden dreidels,** *2½", $17 for 10, amazon.com.* **Martha Stewart multisurface satin acrylic craft paint,** *in Lemon Squeeze and Coastal Blue, from $7 for 2 oz., amazon.com/marthastewart.* **FolkArt acrylic paint,** *in Summer Peach, $1.75 for 2 oz,, plaidonline.com.*

| THE FIND |

Love Notions

Style editor-at-large Naomi deMañana adores novelty-shaped plastic buttons, because they remind her of vintage Bakelite jewelry from the 1930s. But these tiny tchotchkes are brand-spanking-new! Wildly affordable and widely available at crafts and sewing stores, they make unique gift-giving accents. Center one on a small box in place of a bow, or secure them onto card stock or tags with a twist of wire or an embroidery-floss stitch. Pick tiny bruins for Mama and Papa Bear, or add clever drawings (like our cabin-smoke names) to max out the impact of these minis.

THE DETAILS: Embellishment Buttons Camping collection, *$2.50 for 5, embellishmentbuttons.etsy.com.* **In the Clear mini shipping paper tags,** *$3 for 16, intheclear.etsy.com.* **Paper Presentation card stock,** *8½" by 11", in Ginger, $11; and* **circle cards,** *4", in Matte Latte, $5.50 for 25, paperpresentation.com.*

PROMOTION

A TASTE OF THE *holidays*

Elevate your holiday entertaining this year with this sophisticated charcuterie board featuring sweet and savory bites your guests will love.

FOOD STYLING/PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARGE PERRY

1

McCormick Cinnamon

Pair your savory spread with a sweet nut mix generously sprinkled with the rich, smooth flavor of **McCormick Cinnamon**. The timeless flavor will warm up any holiday board this season. For more holiday ideas & recipes visit **mccormick.com/christmas.**

2

McCormick Garlic Powder

McCormick Garlic Powder brings a smooth, balanced warmth to any charcuterie board. These crunchy and flavorful spiced nuts bring the holidays to your home while adding some texture to your beautiful board. Visit **mccormick.com/thanksgiving** for more unique holiday ideas.

3

King's Hawaiian

Share the taste of pure happiness with the addition of **King's Hawaiian Dinner Rolls**. These fluffy, delicious rolls are perfect for creating bite-sized sandwiches using items from the board. Grab the convenient 24 pack so all your guests can enjoy. Check out **kingshawaiian.com** for more holiday inspirations.

| FUN WITH KIDS |

Spice & Easy

If the thought of baking another batch of gingerbread makes you want to run from the kitchen as fast as you can, here's a sweet little secret. Nyåkers Holiday Gingersnaps ($13 for 12 oz., *amazon.com*), made from the Swedish brand's 1952 recipe, come in whimsical shapes with details perfect for piping—including a pig in honor of the customary Swedish Christmas ham. Assemble toppings, whip up some royal icing, and hand the keys to the cookie kingdom to your diminutive decorators.

THE DETAILS: NY Cake dark- and milk-chocolate pearls, *$9 for 4 oz.;* **white-chocolate pearls,** *$10 for 4 oz.;* **sanding sugar,** *in Coral, $5 for 4 oz.;* **edible sugar diamonds,** *in Pink Extra Small, $11 for 38;* **sugar pearls,** *in Gold, $6 for 4.8 oz.; and* **edible glitter,** *in Metallic Gold, $4 for ¼ oz., nycake.com.* **Nuts.com all-natural chocolate-covered sunflower seeds,** *$9 a lb., nuts.com.*

INSTANT ACCESS
Creative director Abbey Kuster-Prokell decants toppings like sanding sugar, sprinkles, and chocolate-covered sunflower seeds into a muffin tin.

BREEZY SQUEEZY
To help kids pipe like pros, fill mini condiment bottles with icing.

FOOD STYLING BY RILEY WOFFORD

'tis the season for kisses.

KISSES Peanut Butter Blossoms

Get the recipe at hersheyland.com

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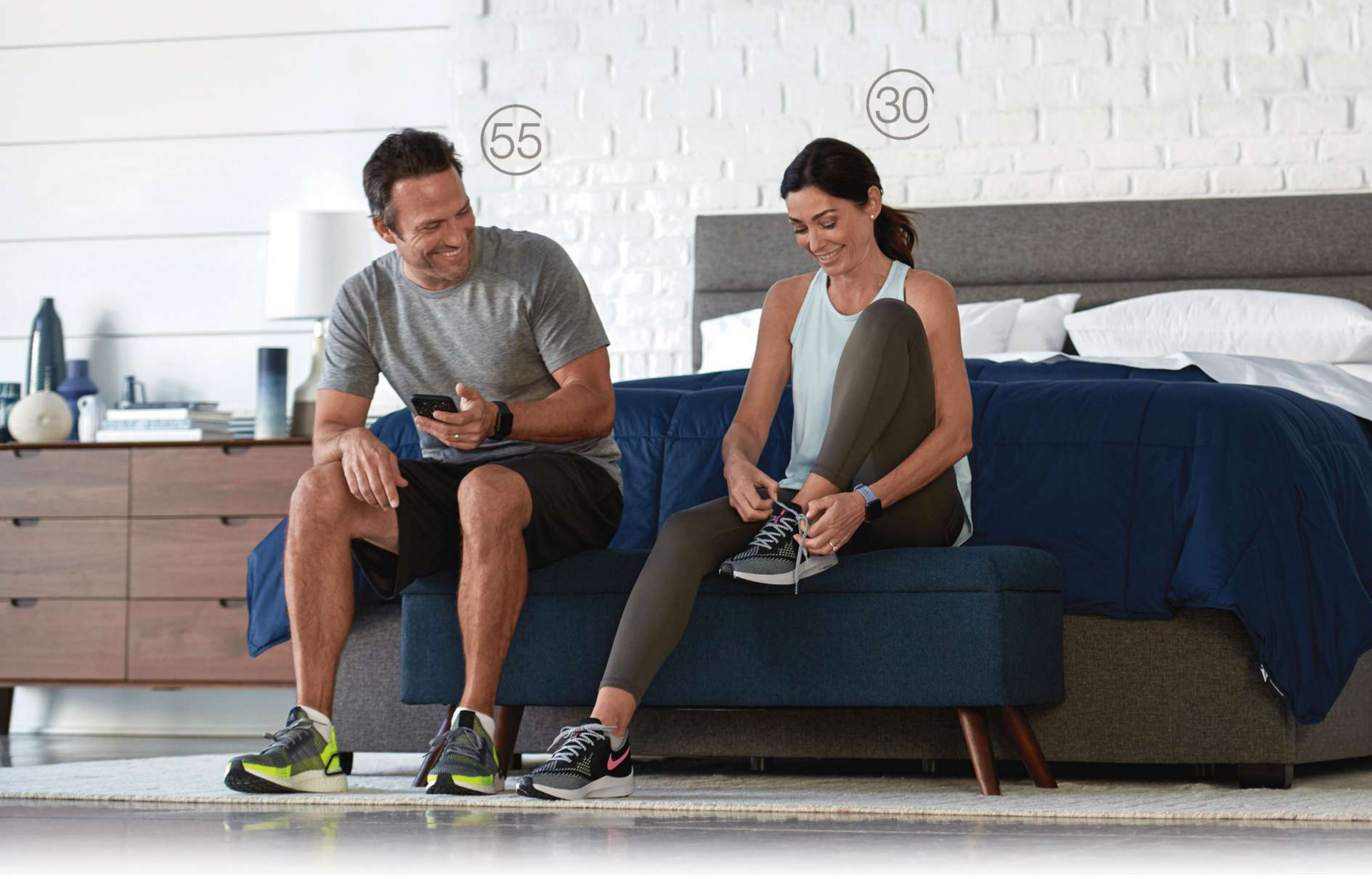

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SCAN TO TAKE OUR BED QUIZ

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WINTER GREENS
Here's an idea you'll tip a party hat to: Plant these conical conifers on your holiday table, sideboard, or mantel. Drizzle their tops with clear gel glue, let it drip down the sides, and dust with white glitter. Then arrange them on a blanket of faux snow.

THE DETAILS: Meri Meri multicolor party hats, *$15 for 8; and* **mini party hats,** *$13 for 8, merimeri.com*. **Blue Panda Store metallic-foil cone party hats,** *$14 for 50, amazon.com*. **Wondershop decorative snow,** *$3 for 2 qt., target.com*.

Looks Like a Party!

For an extra-festive spin on this year's decorations and gift wrap, look to good, old-fashioned party-supply stores to bring on the revelry. Inexpensive garlands, effervescent confetti, and cute favors lend playful pizzazz to presents, and are sure signs that this holiday is something to celebrate.

TEXT BY LISA BUTTERWORTH CREATED BY NAOMI DEMAÑANA

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JESSICA ANTOLA

Enlist an **Oh Happy Day Festive Festooning tissue-paper garland** as ribbon ($4 for 25 ft., *shop.ohhappyday.com*), and a **Paper Mart Diagonal Stripes Merchandise favor bag** to hold a note ($2.25 for 25, *papermart.com*). *Right:* Punctuate a gift with an effusive **Party City white-tinsel gift bow** ($2, *partycity.com*).

Add a **Meri Meri Bright party candle** to make a wish come true ($11 for 24, *merimeri.com*). The "flame" is cut-out masking tape topped with a **Sticko Alphabet Aphrodite sticker** ($5 for 162, *amazon.com*).

Monogram a rad checkerboard package with a **Merry Stockings felt letter** ($5 for 60, *merrystockings.com*) and a few dots of glue.

MINTY FRESH

Turn plain packages into conversation pieces with flashy store-bought bows and decorative items like garlands, stickers, and candles.

THE DETAILS: Oren International kraft-paper roll, *36" by 200', in Light Green, $30; and* **JAM Paper gift wrap,** *in White, $18 for 50 sq. ft., amazon.com.* **JAM Paper metallic gift wrapping,** *in Silver, $14 for two 25-sq.-ft. rolls, target.com.* **Choice Green Check basket liners,** *9" by 10", $13 for 1,000, webstaurantstore.com.*

‘Tis the season for gift giving

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that lets you save huge on brands you know
and products you’ll love.

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For the Home Chef

1. **Tilt Head Stand Mixer**
   Sold For $25.17 ~~$380~~
2. **Pourover Coffee Set**
   Sold For $0.27 ~~$139~~

For the Techie

3. **Mirrorless Camera**
   Sold For $40.91 ~~$998~~
4. **12” Tablet**
   Sold For $41.29 ~~$1,000~~
5. **Gaming Console**
   Sold For $0.50 ~~$500~~

For the Trendsetter

6. **Leather Handbag**
   Sold For $13.31 ~~$1,680~~
7. **Perfume**
   Sold For $2.50 ~~$420~~
8. **100% Cashmere Scarf**
   Sold For $3.90 ~~$450~~
9. **Artisanal Glass Vase**
   Sold For $13.77 ~~$170~~

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GLITZY BUSINESS
Gold confetti puts the "fest" in the Festival of Lights. To set this jubilant Hanukkah scene, spray-paint a simple menorah with matte white paint, let it dry, and adhere the confetti with craft glue. Glue metallic flakes (cut from sheets of easy-to-melt edible gold) onto candles. Then let gold-fringed paper cups, Mylar-tied straws, and gleaming gelt complete the theme.

THE DETAILS: Israel Giftware Design stainless steel menorah *(similar to shown), $48, wayfair.com.* **Creatology confetti glitter,** *$2 for .88 oz., michaels.com.* **Creative Candles thin tapers,** *12", $30 for 8, creativecandles.com.* **Slofoodgroup 24-karat edible gold sheets,** *$25 for 10, amazon.com.* **Fringe party cups,** *$9 for 8, burkedecor.com.* **Chocolate gelt,** *$16 for 70, chocolategelt.com.* **Spritz gold paper straws,** *$3.50 for 20, target.com.* **Brother Sister Design Studio gold Mylar gift shred,** *$2, hobby lobby.com.*

WIN $25K

To help get your home ready for the holidays, visit *marthastewart.com/25kHoliday* and enter to win $25,000. For details, see page 110.

Scoop **Linder Gold fudge chocolate swirls** ($26 a lb., *justcandy.com*) into a **Beau-coup gold treat cone** ($3 for 8, *beau-coup.com*). Tuck trinkets into 24-karat vessels, like a **Party City metallic-gold mini piñata** (above left; $6, *partycity.com*) or **Oribe rosette favor box** (left; $13 for 5, *gallery91.square.site*).

Spark joy with extras such as **Dreidel Company Hanukkah candles,** a gelt-filled **dreidel** (left, $13 for 45 and $7, *dreidelcompany.com*), or a **Golden Sparkler Wand letter** (above left, $6, *tops malibu.com*).

Place a **gold-foil paper crown** under a ribbon to give a plain box the royal treatment ($3 for 12, *funcarnival.com*). Pack treats in **Paper Mart Chinese takeout boxes** (right; $29 for 24, *amazon.com*).

BLUSHING BEAUTY
This modern wooden dowel tree is perennial and practical—you can reassemble it each year. Fill it with honeycomb balls that pack flat post-holiday, and parlay a layered tinsel fringe garland into a shimmery tree skirt by wrapping it around the tree base, cutting it to fit, and hot-gluing the ends of the band together.

THE DETAILS: Welcome to the Woodshop Beaded Heirloom tree, *$185 for 5 ft., welcometothewoodshop.etsy.com.* **Meri Meri tinsel fringe garland,** *$20, merimeri.com.* **Oh Happy Day Honeycomb mini balls,** *2", $7 for 10; and* **Folk paper tassels,** *$18 for 6, shop.ohhappyday.com.* **Just Artifacts honeycomb balls,** *4", $1 each, justartifacts.net. On gifts:* **Kierkegaard Design Studio Pale Millennial Blush Pink wrapping paper,** *$17 for 5 sheets, society6.com.* **Carte Fini crepe paper,** *90 g, in Peach (similar to shown), $6 for 50 cm by 150 cm, cartefini.com.* **Outus round tissue confetti,** *1", $10 for 10,000 pieces, amazon.com.* **Party City orange polka-dot streamer,** *$2 for 8 ft., partycity.com.* **Ooh La La Party Paperie ruffled crepe-paper streamers** *(similar to shown), $3 for 12 ft., oohlalaparty paperie.etsy.com.*

SHAG-ALICIOUS
What to do with the garland left over from your tree skirt? Twirl it into tassels. Cut the excess into six-inch lengths and roll each up along the band, securing every rotation with hot glue. Then top them with ornament caps to hang (we mixed them with shorter, store-bought tassels.)

Festive Season

Meet the newest arrivals for a healthy, happy holiday time.

Quality
Bodywide Recovery
Ancient Nutrition Collagen Peptides is THE go-to delivering results in as little as one day!* Support hair, skin, joints, gut & reduce collagen degradation with noticeable results!* Target, kroger.com & ancientnutrition.com

Play Dough Reimagined!

Engage the imagination with the glittery look of Land of Dough. It's eco-friendly, handcrafted dough that's fun to mash, mix and knead! **landofdough.com**

Classic Christmas Collectibles

Annalee has been making whimsical felt dolls since 1934! Create festive displays with their Santas, deer, elves and mice! Free Ship $29+! **annalee.com** Code: **FS21MSL**

Take Holiday Baking To The Next Level

Bob's Red Mill Organic Unbleached White All Purpose Flour is unbromated baking flour milled from top quality wheat at 10-12% protein content & ready to use in all your favorites: pie crust, pastries, bread, cookies & more. **bobsredmill.com**

A Slice Of Heaven Straight From New York

World-famous Carnegie Deli Cheesecake is the perfect decadent dessert to share with family & friends, and a gift-worthy delight! Enjoy it upon arrival or save for a special occasion. Free Ship + 10% off! Code: **Martha10** at **carnegiedeli.com**

Absurdly Good Honey

Pass the Honey is 100% unadulterated, raw and regeneratively sourced honeycomb. The original superfood with immunity boosting benefits. TIP: elevate your charcuterie spread or snack pre-workout! 25% off! Code: **MS2125** at **passthehoney.com**

TIP use the lot code to find your field

Flax Never Tasted so Good!

Flax4Life's homebaked style cookies w/flaxseed (fiber, omega 3s, protein) are one mega-delicious snack. 30% off! *(Exp. 12/31/21)* **flax4life.net** Code: **tipsntrends**

Amazing Tasting Granola

Hand baked Milk & Honey Granola's crunchy, light caramelized flavor makes healthy eating a delight! 15% off! *(Exp. 12/31/21)* **milkandhoneygranola.com** Code: **MSL15**

HOVER your phone's camera over the code for access to shop! **@tipsntrends**

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Known by Italian cooks & food aficionados as the gold standard for taste, Cento Certified San Marzano Tomatoes are the only US brand produced in Italy with growing & harvesting monitored to ensure world-renowned flavor. **findmyfield.com**

Fun, Cool Gardening Gift!

Grow your own delicious, gourmet oyster mushrooms in just 10 days. It's easy & the whole family can join in! 25% off! **backtotheroots.com** Code: **MARTHA25OFF**

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The First In At-Home Laser Lipo

Drop inches of fat from the very first week. Nushape's LED Lipo System is the first of its kind, clinical strength, wearable flexible belt that's comfy & non-invasive. 10% off! Code: **MARTHA10** at **nushape.com**

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Shown: Joska, Matte Black 5-Light Chandelier (351-8634) *bulbs sold separately.*

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| THE GIFT GUIDE |

Everybody Wins

Knock it out of the park this year with presents your nearest and dearest will adore. These 60 ideas, whittled down from hundreds of contenders, are playful yet thoughtful, luxe but life-changingly essential. Many are crafted in the U.S. and sustainably made, too. Got your list handy? Let's roll.

TEXT BY CATHERINE HONG

THEY'VE GOT GAME Handmade from supple leather, a **Sabah Travel Backgammon Set** unfurls into a handsome 15-inch board that makes every match, win or lose, a delight. *$195, sabah.am.*

STYLING BY TANYA GRAFF

PHOTOGRAPHS BY DAVID CHOW

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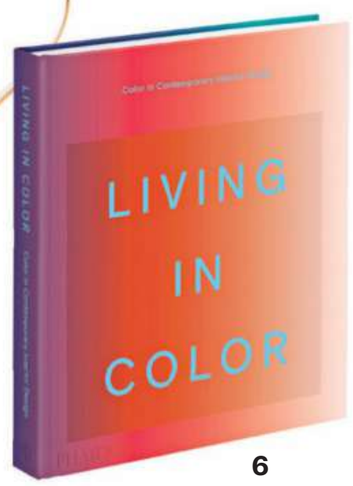

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“These intricately hand-carved and -dyed wooden trays make serving holiday drinks even more elegant.”
—style director Tanya Graff

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10

COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (1, 2, 4–7, 10)

HOME RUNS

1. This block-printed **Capri Sofa Throw** by **Bunny Williams Home** offers a double dose of beauty and comfort: It’s reversible! *$225, bunnywilliamshome.com*. ***2.*** Made from sustainably harvested oak, the **Community Basket** by **Stephen Burks x Berea College Students** can hold blankets, towels, or a mountain of toys. Proceeds benefit the college. *$390, dwr.com*. ***3.*** With graphic, machine-washable **Minna Dog Beds,** four-legged family members get a posh landing spot. *$225 each, minna-goods.com*. ***4.*** Efficient and arresting, the **Custodian Wing Hand Broom** is handmade from North American–grown sorghum grass. *$88, bloomist.com*. ***5.*** Treat plant parents to a chic, long-spouted **Greendigs Watering Can.** *$30, martha.com*. ***6. Living in Color*** (Phaidon) showcases delectable design images in every shade on the spectrum. *$40, bookshop.org*. ***7.*** A hand-thrown **ArkElements Pompeii Amphora Vase** holds its own among antique and Eames furniture alike. *From $184, thearkelements.com*. ***8.*** An **Ifuji Italianate Tray** in gray vegetable-dyed maple is a nice twist on traditional serveware. *From $150, marchsf.com*. ***9.*** Guaranteed to excite even advanced jigsawers, **Artisan Books’ Hello, Dahlias! 1,000-Piece Puzzle** reveals a photograph by potter Frances Palmer. *$20, workman.com*. ***10.*** Handblown **DH McNabb x Public Glass Carafe-and-Cup Sets** are a joy to wake up to. *$220 each, publicglass.org*.

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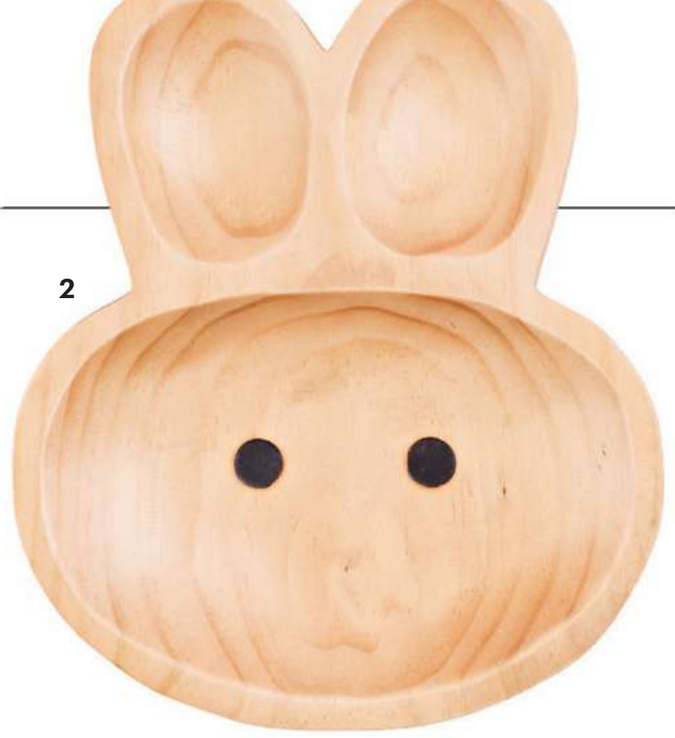

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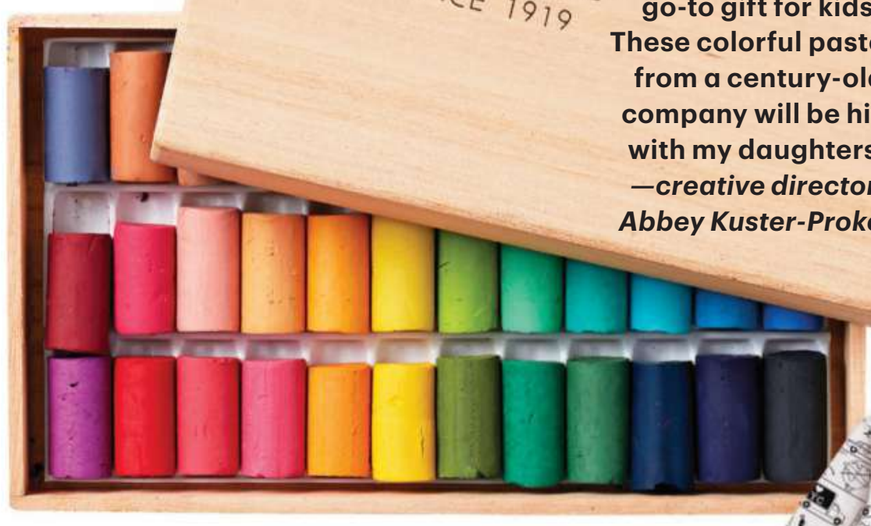

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“Art supplies are my go-to gift for kids. These colorful pastels from a century-old company will be hits with my daughters.” *—creative director Abbey Kuster-Prokell*

COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (2–6, 8–10, 12)

SMALL VICTORIES

1. **The Dough Project**’s **DIY Mix Variety Pack** gives kiddos the fun of making natural modeling clay—and smushing it. *$39, thedoughproject.com.* ***2.*** Neatniks can separate their peas and pasta in the cutest possible way with a **Poketo Wooden Rabbit Plate.** *$18, poketo.com.* ***3.*** Don’t be fooled: This adorable **Loog Ukelele** is the real deal. *$79, loogguitars.com.* ***4.*** The enamel **Keep It Subtle Bracelet** by **Roxanne Assoulin** will complete your teen’s OOTD (google it). *$75, roxanneassoulin .com.* ***5.*** The fair-trade **Patagonia Kids’ Retro-X Fleece Jacket** is 100 percent–recycled polyester and oh-so-soft. *$129, patagonia.com.* ***6.*** Two gorg glosses come in **Halsey**’s **About Face Lipped Locked Bundle.** *$32, aboutface.com.* ***7.*** Thrill mini Renoirs with a **Gondola Pastel Soft Pastel Set,** made in Kyoto, Japan. *$98, nickeykehoe.com.* ***8.*** They’ll walk the pup they begged for last year with a **House Dogge Cee Elle Comfort Leash;** it’s leather with a merino-lined handle. *From $60 each, housedogge.com.* ***9.*** The **Flybar Maverick 2.0 Foam Pogo Stick** takes a beating and keeps on bouncing. *$55, amazon.com.* ***10. She Heard the Birds,*** by Andrea D’Aquino (Princeton Architectural), tells of a pioneering naturalist via poetic text and images. *$19, bookshop.org.* ***11.*** The **JK Adams Children’s Baking Set** fits tiny hands. *$55, jkadams.com.* ***12.*** Snuggles call for organic-cotton loungewear by **Maptote x Winter Water Factory.** *Top, $38; and sweatpants, $42, maptote.com.*

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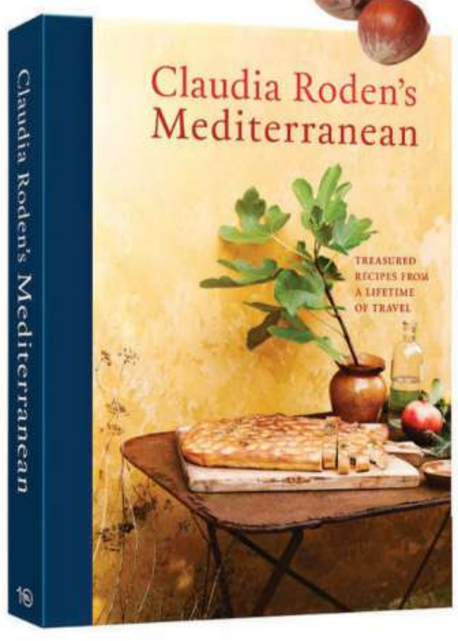

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> **These will make my mom's legendary pizzelle cookies the high point of the dessert table."**
> ***—art director James Maikowski***

PETER ARDITO (13); COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (1–4, 6, 7, 9–12, 14, 16)

KITCHEN ALL-STARS

1. The super-shiny, copper-plated **Old Dutch Copper Hammered Canister Set** keeps flour, oats, and beans fresh with an extra-tight seal. *$120, heritagegoodsandsupply.com*. ***2.*** Our test kitchen can attest: The small-batch **H3irloom Hot Sauce Trio,** handcrafted by renowned Baltimore chefs David and Tonya Thomas, is wonderfully vinegary, peppery, and earthy. *$33, h3irloom.com*. ***3.*** Replace someone's dingy pair with zingy **Dusen Dusen Oven Mitts.** *$24 each, dusendusen.com*. ***4.*** The beechwood-and-brass **Farmhouse Pottery Crafted Wooden Nutcracker** opens shells easily and fits nicely in your hand. *$50, farmhousepottery.com*. ***5.*** With their classic shape and fluted edges, **Martha Stewart Cake Stands** put even the humblest pies, tarts, and bars on a pedestal. *$40 for set of 2, martha.com*. ***6.*** In ***Claudia Roden's Mediterranean*** (Ten Speed), a feast of the region's cooking, the Cairo native seals her place in the pantheon of culinary gurus. *$40, indiebound.org*. ***7.*** Help the romaine or kale lover in your life hail Caesar in style with **Jayson Home**'s **Eve Salad Servers,** distinguished by their leather-wrapped handles. *$52, jaysonhome.com*.

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> “This has become my favorite pan for nearly every cooking task. I especially love that it can go straight from stove top to table!” *—senior food editor Lauryn Tyrell*

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8. **Il Buco Vita**’s **Cruet Set** bundles the beloved NYC eatery’s artisanal Italian olive oil, red-wine vinegar, and hand-thrown Perugian ceramic cruets. *$150, ilbucovita.com*. ***9.*** Feeling more café than *cucina*? The **Breville Barista Express** brews excellent espressos and cappuccinos. *$700, breville.com*. ***10.*** The **RunAmok Maple Syrup Large Gift Box** will transform pancakes—or even a scoop of fresh snow—into something transcendent. *$70, runamokmaple.com*. ***11.*** A knockout for cooks who appreciate a good browning, the **Smithey Carbon-Steel Round Roaster** roasts chicken, sears chops, achieves the perfect *socarrat* on paella, and looks glorious on the table. *$275, smithey.com*. ***12.*** Golden-rimmed **Martha Stewart Collection Coupe Glasses** give celebrations extra effervescence. *$70 for 4, macys.com*. ***13.*** **RW Guild Passiflora Cocktail Napkins** will be instant heirlooms. *$14 each, rwguild.com*. ***14.*** Farmed in India using organic, biodynamic, and sustainable methods, **Alaya Darjeeling First Flush Black Tea** steeps an ultrasmooth floral cup. *$22 for 3.5 oz., alayatea.co*. ***15.*** A gift of the **SpiceWalla Indian Essentials Ground Spices Six-Pack** ensures mouthwatering soups, dals, and curries. *$33, spicewallabrand.com*. ***16.*** The **Opinel Les Forgés 1890 8-Inch Chef Knife** is fully forged, handles effortlessly, and holds a sharp edge. *$179, opinel-usa.com*.

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“My fashion-loving 23-year-old niece in Chicago will look so polished in this, and it will keep her toasty-warm all winter.” *—executive editor Jennie Tung*

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COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (1, 2, 4–6, 9)

STYLE SCORES

1. Free of parabens, sulfates, and phthalates, **Brooklyn Candle Studio Soap Bars** pamper skin and smell divine. *$50 for 3, brooklyncandlestudio.com.* ***2.*** **We Are Knitters’ #Borntodye Natural Extracts Set** features two skeins of fine wool and a choice of natural dyes. *From $65, weareknitters.com.* ***3.*** **Martha**’s **Faux Fur Pull-Through Scarf** glams up a winter outfit in a white-hot minute. *$40, martha.com.* ***4.*** Hear, hear—when you give a **Libro.fm Membership,** friends get an audiobook every month, and indie bookstores share in the profit. *From $45 for 3 months, libro.fm.* ***5.*** A silky blend of coconut, olive, and rosehip-seed oils, **By/Rosie Jane Dylan Everyday Body Oil** does self-care right. *$40 for 120 ml, byrosiejane.com.* ***6.*** We’ve found the ideal leather crossbody purse in the buttery-soft **A.P.C. Maelys Bag.** *$280, apc-us.com.* ***7.*** **Seree Bangles** (shown in Jadeite and Quartzite) stack with satisfying clinks. *From $75 each, seree.co.* ***8.*** Knit in Santa Fe, **Golightly Cashmere Watchcaps** are crazy-cozy and fit snugly. *$165 each, golightlycashmere.com.* ***9.*** Quelling frizz and flyaways with a citrusy scent, **Crown Affair**’s **The Oil** will be your BFF’s new BF. *$40, crownaffair.com.* ***10.*** She can also tuck her treated locks into the **Aveda x 3.1 Phillip Lim Hair Towel Wrap** and protect her sheets. *$40, Aveda salons & stores.* ***11.*** **Naadam**’s **The Essential $75 Cashmere Sweater** is a sustainable staple. *$75, naadam.co.*

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COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (1, 4–7, 10)

SLAM DUNKS

1. The **Retrospec Beaumont 7-Speed City Bike** is a dashing and well-engineered ride. *$350, retrospec.com*. ***2.*** Give bliss: The **Martha Stewart CBD Wellness Gummies Limited Edition Winter Box** includes hit flavors like blood orange and Meyer lemon. *$65 for 72, marthastewartcbd.com*. ***3.*** Native American–owned denim company **Ginew** makes durable classics, like this **Mohican Crew Chambray Shirt.** *$198, ginewusa.com*. ***4.*** The **Alder New York Cleansing Facial Brush** stimulates skin for an impeccably fresh finish. *$26, aldernewyork.com*. ***5.*** **Fjallraven**'s **High Coast Totepack,** made of recycled nylon, converts to a backpack and folds into a pouch for travel. *$70, fjallraven.com*. ***6.*** Rugged and leather-wrapped, the **Ready Objects Circle Key Chain** is the sexy cowboy of key rings. *$88, nickeykehoe.com*. ***7.*** **Fulton & Roark Formula 5 Oil** is a beard oil, skin-and-scalp moisturizer, and hair styler in one. *$31 for 30 ml, fultonandroark.com*. ***8.*** For the smoothest shaves of his life, wrap up the three-step **Shaving Regimen** by **Frederick Benjamin** (shave gel not shown). *$36, frederickbenjamin.com*. ***9.*** The **Raleigh Denim Workshop Mending Kit** patches holes, fixes rips, and adds priceless patina to well-loved jeans. *$40, raleighdenimworkshop.com*. ***10.*** Eat your heart out, Wes Anderson: the **Lego Ideas Typewriter** achieves the trifecta of retro, geeky, and literary. *$200, lego.com*.

MARTHA STEWART
American Made

Making Impressions

Intricately embossed springerle cookies originated in central Europe, where they've trumpeted the holidays for more than 500 years. **House on the Hill,** a female-run company in Rosebud, Missouri, is keeping the tradition alive and well stateside.

TEXT BY MELISSA OZAWA

The secret to sharp details is to let the pressed cookie dough rest for 24 hours before baking. "This forms a crust on top and preserves the design," says owner Letha Misener (*houseonthehill.net*).

PROP STYLING BY LORNA ARAGON; FOOD STYLING BY RILEY WOFFORD

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LENNART WEIBULL

House on the Hill Springerle Cookies

This recipe uses baker's ammonia, aka hartshorn (available at *king arthurbaking.com*), which creates a light and fluffy texture.

- **½ teaspoon baker's ammonia (hartshorn) or baking powder**
- **2 tablespoons whole milk**
- **6 large eggs, room temperature**
- **6 cups confectioners' sugar**
- **½ cup unsalted butter, softened**
- **½ teaspoon fine salt**
- **½ teaspoon oil of anise (or 3 to 4 teaspoons lemon or orange oil)**
- **Grated orange or lemon zest (optional)**
- **2 pounds sifted cake flour (not self-rising), plus more for dusting**

1. Dissolve baker's ammonia in milk; set aside about 20 minutes. Meanwhile, beat eggs in a mixer on medium-high speed until thick and lemon-colored, 10 to 20 minutes. Slowly beat in confectioners' sugar, then butter. Add milk mixture, salt, oil of anise, and grated zest, if using. Beat until incorporated.

2. Switch to paddle attachment and gradually beat in as much flour as you can with mixer, then stir in the remainder to make a stiff dough. Turn out onto a floured surface and, if needed, knead in more flour to make a good print without sticking. (Dough can now be refrigerated in a tightly sealed bag up to 48 hours.)

3. On a floured surface, roll out dough approximately ½ inch thick (or thinner or thicker, based on depth of carving in cookie press you are using). Flour mold for each press-ing. Press mold firmly and straight down into dough, then lift, cut out, and place formed cookie on a parch-ment-lined baking sheet. Let cookies dry, uncovered, at least 12 and prefer-ably 24 hours to set design. (Larger cookies and warm, humid weather may require longer drying times.)

4. Preheat oven to 300°. Transfer cookies to parchment-lined baking sheets and bake until barely golden on bottoms, 10 to 15 minutes, or more, depending on size. Let cool completely. Cookies can be stored in airtight containers at room tem-perature for months, and will im-prove with age.

MAKES: 3 TO 12 DOZEN, DEPENDING ON MOLD

"The dough should be the consistency of fresh Play-Doh," says Misener with a laugh. "If it feels tacky, just knead in more flour."

WHEN SHE WAS A LITTLE GIRL, Connie Meisinger couldn't wait to open the tin of springerles her German grandmother sent each Christ-mas. The cakelike cookies tasted like anise and featured sweet, wintry motifs. "My father was in the air force, so we moved a lot," she recalls. "Those cookies connected us." Years later, she inherited her grand-mother's recipe and began sharing dozens with loved ones each season; in 1993, her passion became public when she was a winner of the famed *Chicago Tribune* cookie contest. This caught the attention of Caroline Kallas, then-owner of House on the Hill, a small mail-order company specializing in the molds, who introduced her to her de-signs. Meisinger became a devoted client—so devoted, she bought the company in 2002.

House on the Hill's molds, both new designs and replicas of originals from pri-vate collections and museums, run the gamut from pinecones and bouquets to ani-mals and Santas. Each picture is carved in wood by an artisan to make a production mold, which is used to cast the hand-poured and -finished wood-resin molds they sell.

When Meisinger retired last summer, she passed the spatula to Letha Misener, another prize-winning baker and loyal customer. Her signature treats, which she sells at fairs and holiday markets, are flavored with orange and raspberry, and some are iced with chocolate on the back. "Springerles are special," Misener says, echoing Meis-inger's sentiment. "They bring people back to home, family, and good memories."

Gift to Self

The most wonderful time of the year can also be the most frazzling—even in non-pandemic times. To help you enjoy this month to the fullest, we asked experts for scientifically proven ways to stay healthy (eat your prebiotics) and happy (let go of perfection!). Implement these eight ideas now, and thank yourself later.

TEXT BY NAOMI BARR

1. Play Strong Defense

For better immunity, start with the heaviest hitters: a flu shot and, if you're eligible, a Covid booster to keep viruses at bay. These reach max efficacy in two weeks, so the ideal time for the flu shot is early fall—but now is not too late. Then talk to your doctor about taking supplements like vitamin C, which can help vanquish certain bacteria and shorten the duration of common colds; and vitamin D, which may play a role in fighting off Covid-19 and its variants, per early research from *Endocrine Practice*. Also, raise your heart rate. According to a review published earlier this year in *Sports Medicine*, regular exercise can increase our antibody counts so significantly that it can lower our risk of developing a viral or bacterial infection by a stunning 31 percent. (For winter-friendly ways to fit in some activity, turn the page.) Prioritize shut-eye, since any less than seven to nine hours a night can lead to higher stress-hormone levels in your body, which can impair your immune-system response. And don't forget to make time to see close friends and loved ones, even if it's virtual or outdoors under a heat lamp. Maintaining social ties not only reduces stress; it lowers your risk of colds.

2. Trust Your Gut

When your digestive system is functioning well, it teems with beneficial microbes, aka probiotics, that support immunity. Unfortunately, many of December's delicious offerings have the opposite effect: "Foods high in sugar and fat are exactly what our gut microbiome doesn't like," says Gail Cresci, PhD, RD, a microbiome researcher in the department of pediatric gastroenterology, hepatology, and nutrition at Cleveland Clinic Children's Hospital. "When we eat more of those, that shift in diet can throw good and bad bacteria out of

STYLING BY TANYA GRAFF; CALLIGRAPHY BY LINDA YOSHIDA

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID CHOW

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balance within a day or two." Fortunately, they bounce back just as quickly. Between yuletide treats, restore your gut with probiotic-rich fermented foods like yogurt and kimchi, and eat plenty of whole grains and colorful fruits and vegetables; these foods contain *pre*biotics, which feed probiotics so they thrive. Poor sleep, stress, travel, and sitting around more than usual can derail digestion, too. Supplemental probiotics also help reset your microflora. Look for at least one billion units of bacteria, keep them in the fridge (even shelf-stable ones stay alive longer in cool temps), and take them at about the same time each day.

3. Practice Mind Over Platter

Speaking of those holiday indulgences: If you want to skip overdoing it in the first place, take a page from the Institute for Integrative Nutrition, in New York City. Its health-coaching program posits that when you feel full in ways that really matter—having strong relationships, a healthy body, an active mind, and pursuits that you're passionate about—food becomes secondary. So when you walk into a gathering, focus on fostering connections rather than just beelining to the buffet. "Make a point to have fun with friends or family," says Jennifer Wegmann, PhD, a lecturer in the department of health-and-wellness studies at Binghamton University, in New York. "Ask questions about their lives, and really listen to the answers." Drop into this time with others, and when you do sink your teeth into a piece of pie, chew slowly so you can focus on the incredible flavors.

4. Get a Move On

Cold weather, shorter days, and overstuffed schedules make working out tougher, but staying active is essential to firing up your metabolism, energy levels, and mood. Think of physical activity not as a to-do, but as a generous present to yourself. Plan a walk with friends rather than a coffee date (or do both—ask them to walk with you to a bar or café). Get your steps in—and support local stores—by shopping for gifts in town. Choose physical family activities: Feel the wind in your hair at a favorite skating rink, rally a pickleball tournament on an indoor court, or turn up some jazzy holiday tunes and get everyone swinging.

5. Count Your Lucky Stars

Reams of research support it: People who regularly express gratitude live significantly healthier, more joy-filled lives. You can list your blessings in a journal or while meditating, but "it can also be texting a loved one something you appreciate about them," says Paula Gill Lopez, PhD, an associate professor of psychological and educational consultation at Fairfield University, in Connecticut. Or give thanks by giving back: Donate to a charity that has personal meaning for you, like the animal shelter where you adopted your pup; or walk a box of your prized Christmas cookies over to the neighbor who shoveled snow off your driveway.

6. Take a Time-Out

Family is family, for better or for worse! When the going gets tense, try this move, which Peloton yoga instructor Chelsea Jackson Roberts employs to deflate stress, stat: Lie on the floor with a rolled blanket under your knees; place one hand on your heart center (where your rib cage meets) and the other on your stomach. Take three slow, deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth; then breathe naturally for a few minutes, feeling the rise and fall of your chest and belly. Repeat as needed.

7. Holiday Your Way

We've all discovered that some of the "temporary" changes of the past two years—working remotely, spending more time with family, sporting slippers all day—may be things we want do permanently. For some people, another newfound pleasure is scaled-down holidays. Should the idea of a large party make you squirm, politely decline, but suggest dinner or drinks with the host at a later date. If joining family during the biggest travel days of the year sounds harrowing, keep it small now, and plan a reunion at a less busy time, making your decision known in time for others to plan without you. "The better you become at setting boundaries, the less guilt you'll feel, because you're pursuing the things you really want for yourself," says Nedra Glover Tawwab, a Charlotte, North Carolina–based therapist and author of *Set Boundaries, Find Peace* (TarcherPerigee).

8. Stop and Smell the Amaryllis

Studies suggest that acts of self-care can have more lasting, brain-transforming effects if you bring your full attention to them. "When you do something nice for someone else or yourself, like support a small business, that warm feeling triggers the release of feel-good neurotransmitters, such as oxytocin and endorphins, in your brain. But after a little while they will subside," says Gill Lopez. However, taking time to have an engaging chat with the shop owner, for example, will dig deeper grooves for those smile-inducing chemicals to flow more easily and make feeling happy become more habitual. "Even small actions like sipping your morning coffee can have this effect if you take time to savor it," says Tayyab Rashid, PhD, a clinical positive psychologist at the University of Toronto Scarborough. "This also stops you from anticipating the end of a wonderful experience." In other words, being present is an amazing present in itself.

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The Flower Child

Sophia Moreno-Bunge
Founder of Isa Isa,
Santa Monica, California

Every time she starts an arrangement, floral designer Moreno-Bunge draws from the sunny optimism and distinct plant-scape of Los Angeles. "It's Mediterranean meets tropical meets desert," she says of her hometown. Her bold bouquets capture it all: the ocean's cool palette of shells, rocks, and seaweed; and the coast's vivid collage of fuchsia bougainvillea, silvery palms, and scrubby green manzanita trees. Moreno-Bunge studied photography and sculpture at Barnard College, in New York City, then landed a job with Emily Thompson, the celebrated NYC floral designer known for her otherworldly installations. Like her mentor (who also trained as a sculptor), Moreno-Bunge champions local flora, incorporating produce from the farmers' market and clippings from the hundreds of potted plants in her home garden. She makes these "wild, playful" arrangements for clients like fashion designer Rachel Comey and the Kelly Wearstler–designed Proper hotel. "I love all colors, from acid green to geranium red. I don't discriminate," she says of her ebullient personal style. "My goal is to create work that makes you wonder, to open your eyes to what's possible and beautiful." —*Melissa Ozawa*

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NATURAL RESOURCES
"I like using fruits as props, and branches to drape materials like palm inflorescences."

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For a chance to win this face mist, go to *win.marthastewart.com* on November 18. For details, see page 110.

WIN THIS

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TIERNEY GEARON (PORTRAIT); COURTESY OF SOPHIA MORENO-BUNGE (ARRANGEMENT); PETER ARDITO (PANTS); COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (OTHERS)

3

DREAM TRIP
"I hope to visit my extended family in Argentina each year. The landscape is majestic. Everything is beautiful without trying. That's something I try to create in my work."

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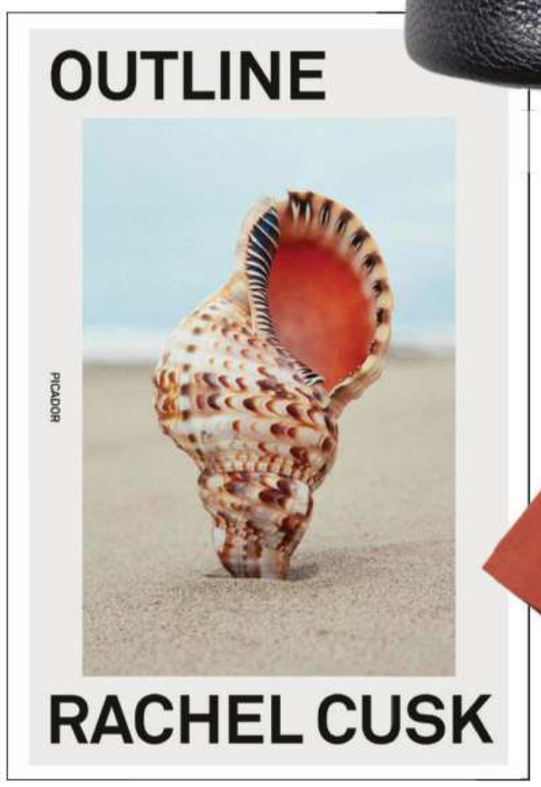

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DOUBLE DUTY
"I also use these glasses as vases. They make a tablescape elegant and fun."

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Her Essentials

1 | Izipizi #G Yellow Honey sunglasses
"Stylish, comfortable, and durable."
$50, global.izipizi.com.

2 | Shaina Mote Aro Shirt, in Onyx
"I pair it with cool large earrings and colorful pants."
$270, shainamote.com.

3 | BZippy LG Diamond Vase
"It only needs a couple of stems to make a graphic statement."
$320, bzippyandcompany.com.

4 | Building Block Mini Bucket Bag, in Pebbled Black
"It has a classic shape, but the tassel and wood-ball details make it feel modern."
$425, building--block.com.

5 | Sophie Monet Pearl Brook Earrings
"They can be dressed up or down."
$175, sophiemonetjewelry.com.

6 | Isa Isa Arrangement
"I am awed by the juiciness growing all over L.A. in the winter."
isafloral.com.

7 | *Outline*, by Rachel Cusk
"I love when you don't know where a story is going, like you're moving along with a character."
Picador USA; $17, bookshop.org.

8 | Ursa Major Màre Ring, in 18k Gold With Aquamarine
"It reminds me of the ocean, which I cannot live without."
$2,280, katejones.us.

9 | For Days 90's Crop SS Tee
"I live in these, and love the company's eco mission."
$32, fordays.com.

10 | Leaves and Flowers Sleep Tea
"I'll drink a cup at night. It's herbaceous and so soothing."
$17 for 1 oz., leavesandflowers.com.

11 | Cultus Artem Tuberosa Eau de Parfum
"It smells like heaven: rich and floral."
$255 for 8.5 ml, cultusartem.com.

12 | Rachel Comey Almarita Pants
"I'll wear this to a holiday party with the matching jacket."
$695, rachelcomey.com.

13 | Ichendorf Milano Tap Glass, in Green
"I collect colored glasses and like how delicate these are."
$16, ichendorfmilano.com.

14 | Martiniano Glove Shoes, in Black
"They're comfortable, and take me from the market to meetings."
$464, martinianoshoes.com.

15 | De Mamiel's Dewy Face Mist
"I spray this throughout the day. It's very refreshing, and crucial for L.A.'s dry weather."
$78 for 100 ml, thedetoxmarket.com.

16 | Ancient Minerals Magnesium Bath Flakes
"My job is so physical that I take a bath with these every night. My body needs it."
$9.75 for 1.65 lb., shop.enviromedica.com.

17 | Ilia Super Serum Skin Tint SPF 40
"It hydrates my skin and gives me a little coverage."
$48, iliabeauty.com.

18 | Asano Mokkousho Japanese Steel Pruning Shears
"They feel good in my hand and will last a lifetime."
$68, bloomist.com.

"For a subtle, sophisticated glow, reach for shadows that look like velvet, not full-on sequins," says Houston makeup artist Tonya Riner. The smaller the particles, the smoother the finish.

| BEAUTY SCHOOL |

Light Show

We all have a natural gleam in our eyes this time of year, and shimmery shadow is a chic and easy way to really play it up. Just choose a flattering shade from the expert picks on these pages, and use their techniques for application. Party, on.

TEXT BY CLAIRE SULLIVAN

STYLING BY ELIZABETH PRESS; PHOTOGRAPHS BY FELICITY INGRAM/TRUNK ARCHIVE (WOMAN), PETER ARDITO (INDIVIDUAL PRODUCTS)

PHOTOGRAPH BY YASU + JUNKO

1 Get Primed

Apply a good primer. "It's an important step when you're wearing shimmer—otherwise, the color fades over time, leaving behind flecks of glitter," says Riner. She likes **Urban Decay Eyeshadow Primer Potion,** because the lightweight cream prevents creasing, lasts for hours, and doesn't alter the shadow's hue ($24, *urbandecay.com*). Smooth a thin layer over lids, and blend outward with your finger.

2 Choose Your Shade

For a candlelit effect, go with a neutral in the same color family as your complexion, says Riner. Or try sheer jewel tones (emerald, garnet); their cool undertones brighten everyone's eyes.

FAIR SKIN
Look luminous in a seasonally apropos champagne, like **Armani Beauty Eye Tint Liquid Eyeshadow,** in Gold Ashes ($30, *giorgioarmanibeauty-usa.com*).

MEDIUM SKIN
Charlotte Tilbury Eyes to Mesmerize, in Star Gold, delivers a creamy wash of bronze ($32, *charlotte tilbury.com*).

DEEP SKIN
For a warm veil of color, try a rich metallic, like **Kosas 10-Second Eyeshadow,** in Copper Halo ($28, *kosas.com*).

UNIVERSAL HIT
Maybelline Color Tattoo Cream Eyeshadow, in Socialite, a true rose gold, is radiant on everyone ($7, *walgreens.com*).

3 Apply & Define

To prevent fallout under your eyes, press the pigments into skin from your upper lash line to just above your crease with clean fingers or a small, densely bristled brush. **Joah Beauty**'s **Dual Eyeshadow Brush** beautifully sweeps creams, liquids, and powders into place ($7, *joahbeauty.com*). For more dramatic color, layer on a matching matte shadow (like **L'Oréal Paris Colour Riche Monos Eyeshadow;** in 20 shades, $6, *walgreens.com*), then another coat of shimmer. Finish with a lengthening mascara; we love **CoverGirl Lash Blast Clean Volume Mascara** ($11, *walgreens.com*).

RAVE REVIEWS

LINER NOTES

"When I want to go glam for the holidays, I love to use these Laura Mercier Caviar Stick Eye Color eyeliners in bold (for me) shades. The fat pencils are forgiving (steady hand optional), and you can smudge it straight on or blend it out for a diffused effect (in 40 shades, $29, *laura mercier.com*). My favorites are (above, from left) Amethyst, a dreamy, sophisticated lavender; Moonlight, perfect for adding a soft glint to your eyes' inner corners; and Khaki, for a smoky look with just the right amount of drama. For just a lightly defined eye, I grab a fine-pointed gel option, like Stila Cosmetics Stay All Day Smudge Stick Waterproof Eyeliner (in 13 shades, $22, *stilacosmetics.com*). One flick of the Lionfish shade, a pearly rust, just past my outer lashes, and I have a fairy-dusted cat eye." —*CS*

| COUNTER INTELLIGENCE |

Good Travelers

Between streamlining your makeup and preventing product leaks, a beauty routine can be a beast to pack. But these smart, space-saving picks, handy for road trips (or just office ones) and flights alike, will lighten your load without sacrificing your look.

TEXT BY CLAIRE SULLIVAN

The Davines Momo Shampoo Bar moisturizes with melon extract—slice off a small chunk for a trip ($25, *amazon.com*).

The Kusshi Signature Vegan Leather Makeup Bag is an investment piece: Its liner is removable and easy to wipe, and clever pockets and dividers save you from endless rummaging ($119, *kusshi.com*).

THE KEY TO TRAVELING LIKE A PRO: Multitasking goods that excel at everything they do—and keep things neat and together, says Mary Cornetta, founder and co-owner of organizing company Sort + Sweet. Consider these finds your new travel companions:

1 | Cadence Capsules, airtight pods made from recycled plastic, hold vitamins, jewelry, and more. They snap together magnetically (from $14, *keepyourcadence.com*).

2 | Jones Road The Oil Stick blends four nourishing oils into a balm. Massage it over dry skin and cuticles, or use it to highlight cheek- and browbones ($26, *jonesroadbeauty.com*).

3 | Doctor Babor Cleanformance Deep Cleansing Pads lather up with just a few drops of water to sweep away makeup and grime ($40 for 20, *us.babor.com*).

4 | EltaMD UV Glow Broad-Spectrum SPF 36 is a quadruple threat: It primes skin, calms it with niacinamide, illuminates with mica, and protects with SPF ($37, *eltamd.com*).

5 | MOB Face Palette is completely customizable: Pop in your favorite shades of blush, bronzer, and shadows (from $95, *mobbeauty.com*).

6 | Everist Conditioner Concentrate condenses the actives in your usual formula. A dab emulsifies with a splash of water ($24, *helloeverist.com*).

7 | Plus Body-Wash Sheets fully dissolve in the shower, letting you leave the heavy bottle at home ($17 for 16, *cleanwith.plus*).

8 | Bite Toothpaste Bits are as tiny as breath mints; simply pop one in your mouth and start brushing (from $12, *bitetoothpastebits.com*).

9 | Stasher Pocket Bags keep bar soaps, cotton swabs, and hair ties clean and detangled—slip them in and squeeze the air out ($8, *stasherbag.com*).

STYLING BY ELIZABETH PRESS

PHOTOGRAPH BY YASU + JUNKO

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Ask Martha

How can I make my holiday lights last longer, rather than just adding them to a landfill?

—Winsome Leaman, Toccoa, Ga.

If you have old-school sets, take special care not to yank them off your tree or house, says Frank Skinner, director of marketing at Christmas Lights Etc., and avoid using fasteners that might pierce the wiring. Should you encounter a few burnt-out bulbs, try the LightKeeper Pro, a gadget that quickly—and miraculously—fixes a shunt issue behind many seemingly dead bulbs (from $27, *acehardware.com*). If that doesn't work, unplug the lights and swap the duds for new bulbs of the same specs (look for those on a tag on the strand); most sets come with extras, but you can also find replacements on Amazon, Skinner says. If you need new lights, go with LEDs. "Traditional strands work for only about two to three holiday seasons," says Lance Allen, a decorative holiday merchant at the Home Depot. "LEDs can last up to 10 times longer." Plus, there are no filaments to shake loose, and the exteriors are acrylic, not glass. When storing strands, prevent snarls (and protect bulbs) by wrapping each around a cardboard rectangle with one-inch slits cut into the top and bottom.

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My favorite sheets have a floral print on a white background. What's the best way to keep them bright without dulling the pattern?

—Emma Komlos-Hrobsky, New York City

"Hot water fades colors," says Brian Johnson, director of education at the Drycleaning & Laundry Institute, in Laurel, Maryland. So wash the sheets in cold water on a delicate cycle (the reduced agitation will be gentler on the print), with a detergent specifically formulated for cold-water cleaning. Another tip for laundering any bedding: Keep loads small. "Otherwise, the sheets can tangle and wrap around themselves or other items," explains Johnson. "Those areas then trap in soils and prevent them from draining out with the water," leading to a dingy appearance. Finally, dry the sheets on a low heat setting, and remove them promptly to reduce wrinkling.

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My dog won't eat. How can I get him to?

—Juan Hanley, Eugene, Ore.

An occasional skipped meal isn't alarming, says Carlo Siracusa, associate professor of clinical animal behavior and welfare at the University of Pennsylvania School of Veterinary Medicine. But if Cosmo hasn't eaten for a day or more and is exhibiting unusual signs (GI issues, lethargy), see your vet to rule out an illness. "Appetite loss can also be behavioral, especially from stress-based issues like separation anxiety or fears," adds Siracusa; try staying close by during mealtime, or setting the bowl in a quiet room where he feels safe. Two more ideas: Add a spoonful of low-fat cottage cheese or yogurt or canned pumpkin to his kibble; or offer a food-filled toy, which provides stimulation that could rev up his appetite.

LET US HELP!

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Toast the Hosts

Think beyond the wine bottle. Here, unique gifts they'll enjoy into the new year.

1 | Greentree Home Cone Tapers
Sculptural candles in six colors. *$36 for 2, greentreehomecandle.com.*

2 | Jack Henry Cleanse+
Soothing sea extracts and botanicals infuse this face, body, and hair wash. *$28, jackhenry.co.*

3 | Rancho Meladuco Medjool Organic Dates
Nature's candy from California's Coachella Valley. *$22, ranchomeladuco.com.*

4 | Herdada do Esporão Extra-Virgin Olive Oil
It's cold-pressed hours after harvest for delish drizzling. *From $17, portugaliamarketplace.com.*

Reporting by Tina Chadha

GETTY IMAGES (DOG); COURTESY OF MANUFACTURERS (GIFTS)

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APPLE-CARAMEL FRENCH TOAST

FOOD STYLING BY SARAH CAREY; PROP STYLING BY SUZIE MYERS

| EASY ENTERTAINING |

The French Dispatch

Overnight guests? Then don't overthink breakfast. Assemble this caramelized-apple-and-challah casserole a day ahead, and simply ferry it from fridge to oven in the morning. Our pomegranate-grapefruit punch makes a rousing accompaniment—just add a splash of bubbly to keep the *bon temps* rolling.

TEXT BY MICHELLE SHIH RECIPES BY SARAH CAREY

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICO SCHINCO

"I love the tang of grapefruit combined with the soft, floral flavor of lychee juice. And when you crush the basil leaves in your fingers, it brings a taste of summer to the holiday season."
—editorial food director Sarah Carey

After pouring the grapefruit-lychee mixture into a glass, drizzle the pomegranate syrup on top—it will sink to the bottom like grenadine in a tequila sunrise.

| THE MAIN |

Apple-Caramel French Toast

- 1 loaf challah or brioche (1 pound), cut into about twelve ¾-inch-thick slices
- 5 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 cup plus 2 tablespoons packed light-brown sugar, divided
- Kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 4 crisp apples, such as Gala, Braeburn, or Envy, peeled and cut into 1-inch wedges (about 5½ cups)
- 6 large eggs, whisked
- 1⅓ cups whole or 2 percent milk
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Confectioners' sugar, Greek yogurt, toasted chopped pecans, and raspberries or pomegranate arils, for serving

1. Spread bread slices on a baking sheet; let stand at least a few hours and up to overnight. Melt butter in a large ovenproof, nonreactive skillet (like an 11-to-12-inch enameled cast iron) over medium heat. Add 1 cup brown sugar, ¼ teaspoon salt, and lemon juice. Cook, stirring, until sugar dissolves, then bring to a boil; cook 1 minute. Add apples and cook, turning occasionally, until they begin to soften and brown a bit and liquid thickens, about 12 minutes. Let cool 30 minutes.

2. In a wide, shallow dish, whisk together eggs, milk, remaining 2 tablespoons brown sugar, vanilla, and ¼ teaspoon salt. Dip bread in mixture, turning to coat. Arrange atop apples, shingling in concentric circles. Pour remaining mixture on top. Cover; refrigerate at least 2 hours and up to 24.

3. Preheat oven to 350°. Sprinkle French toast with cinnamon and bake, uncovered, until set and golden on top, 35 to 45 minutes. Let stand 15 minutes. Dust with confectioners' sugar; serve with yogurt, pecans, and fruit.

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 3 HR. 45 MIN. | **SERVES:** 4

3 TRICKS TO A PILLOWY TOP

1 — **SLICE THE BREAD THICK**
We suggest ¾ inch—any thinner, and it'll fall apart when soaked in the egg mixture.

2 — **DRY IT THOROUGHLY**
If you don't have time to leave the slices out for several hours, bake them at 175° for 1 hour.

3 — **PLACE IT LIKE PETALS**
Overlap the big pieces from the loaf's center along the outer edge of the skillet and work inward, piling the smallest ones in the center.

| THE DRINK |

Pomegranate-and-Pink-Grapefruit Punch

To make these into "mimosas," top off each glass with dry sparkling white wine or rosé.

Combine 1 cup **pomegranate juice** and ¾ cup **superfine sugar**; stir until sugar dissolves. Refrigerate 1 hour or, covered, up to 3 days. Crush ¼ cup **fresh basil leaves** between your fingers; drop into a pitcher. Add 4 cups chilled **fresh pink-grapefruit juice** (from 4 grapefruits) and 2 cups chilled **lychee juice** (we like Ceres); stir. Fill glasses with **ice**. Add juice mixture and a drizzle of pomegranate syrup. Garnish with more basil leaves and some **pomegranate arils**.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 1 HR. 5 MIN.
SERVES: 6 TO 8

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| WHAT'S FOR DINNER? |

SAVE THE DAY

For rich rewards on a real-life budget, let humble ingredients be the heroes. Chicken thighs bring depth to a lemony piccata, andouille sausages heat up black-bean soup, and spinach and tortellini meld in a cheesy bake. Your only splurge is on flavor.

TEXT BY HANNAH DOROUGH RECIPES BY SARAH CAREY

CHICKEN-THIGH PICCATA WITH BROCCOLI RABE

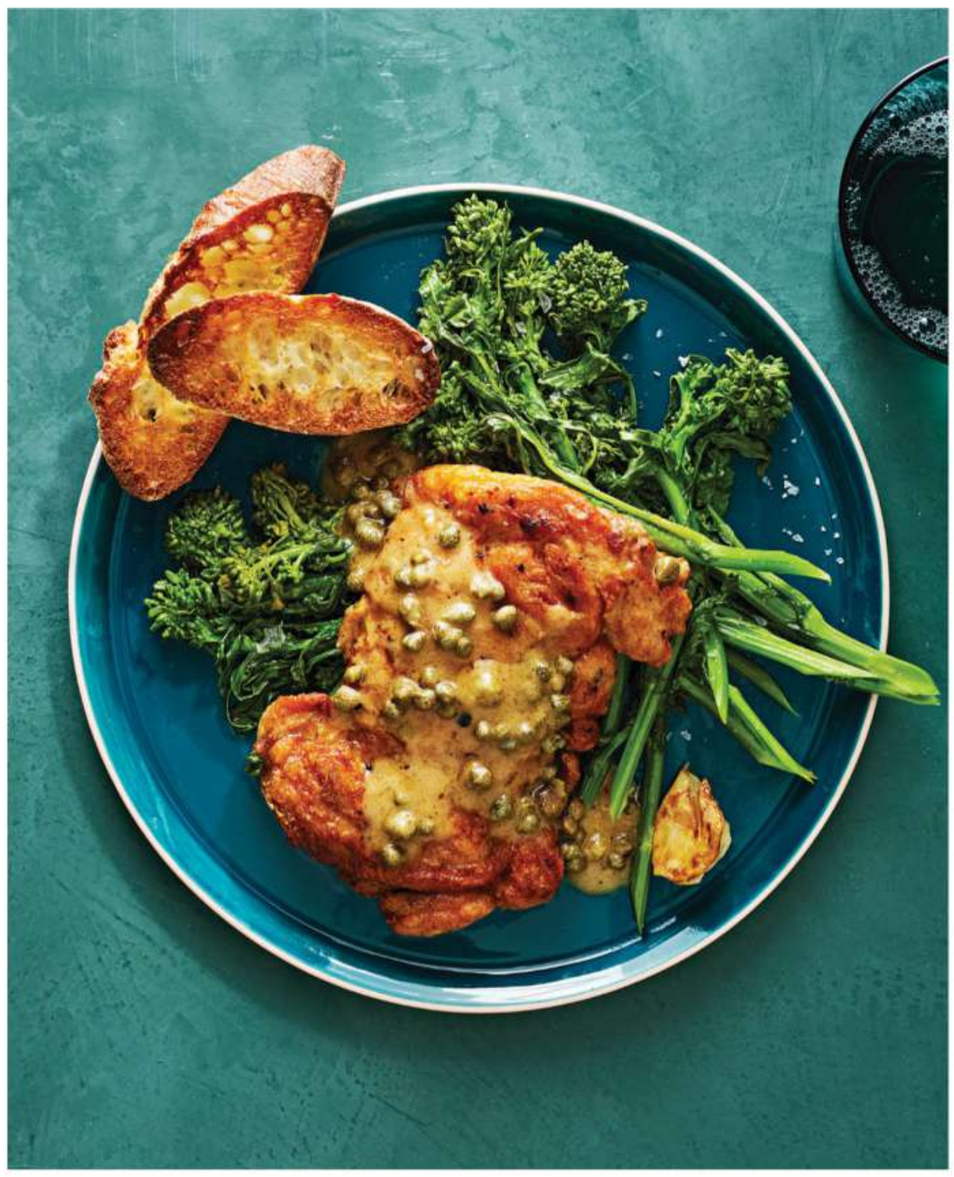
Chicken thighs are always a savvy sub for breasts: They cost significantly less, and are tastier and juicier, too.

FOOD STYLING BY GREG LOFTS; PROP STYLING BY SUZIE MYERS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICO SCHINCO

Smoky Black-Bean Soup With Sausage

Chicken-Thigh Piccata With Broccoli Rabe



Creamy Baked Tortellini With Spinach

Very Veggie Fried Rice With Eggs

Smoky Black-Bean Soup With Sausage

- **2 tablespoons vegetable oil**
- **2 links andouille sausage (6 ounces), cut into ¼-inch-thick slices (1 heaping cup)**
- **1 bunch scallions, sliced (1 cup)**
- **¼ cup thinly sliced celery (from 1 stalk), plus leaves for serving**
- **½ teaspoon dried thyme**
- **1 can (14.5 ounces) diced fire-roasted tomatoes with chiles, such as Muir Glen**
- **2 cans (each 15 ounces) black beans**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **2 tablespoons sour cream, for serving**
- **Watercress, for serving (optional)**

1. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium-high; add sausage and cook, stirring, until crisp, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a plate. Add scallions, celery, and thyme to pan; cook until tender, about 4 minutes. Stir in tomatoes; bring to a boil and cook 3 minutes. Drain and rinse one can of beans, leaving the second in its liquid; add both to pan with 1 cup water. Return to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer 15 minutes. If desired, remove 1 cup of mixture and purée in a blender or food processor until smooth, about 15 seconds, then return to pan. Season with salt and pepper.

2. Top each serving with cooked sausage, a dollop of sour cream, and a small handful of watercress. Sprinkle with pepper and celery leaves; serve.

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 40 MIN. | **SERVES:** 4

Chicken-Thigh Piccata With Broccoli Rabe

- **4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, pounded ¼ inch thick**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **1 tablespoon all-purpose flour, plus more for dredging**
- **4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
- **2 tablespoons capers, drained**
- **1¼ cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided**
- **3 tablespoons fresh lemon juice**
- **2 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- **2 cloves garlic, crushed**
- **1 bunch broccoli rabe (1 pound), trimmed**
- **Toasted rustic bread, for serving**

1. Season chicken with salt and pepper. Dredge in flour, tapping off excess. Heat a large skillet over high; swirl in 3 tablespoons oil. Add chicken; cook until golden brown and cooked through, 3 to 4 minutes a side. Transfer to a plate. Add flour to skillet; cook 30 seconds. Add capers, then whisk in ¾ cup broth until it comes to a boil. Whisk in lemon juice and butter. Return chicken to skillet; coat in sauce and simmer until thickened, about 30 seconds.

2. Heat remaining 1 tablespoon oil in a large saucepan over medium. Add garlic and broccoli rabe; toss to coat. Add remaining ½ cup broth, cover, and simmer, still over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until broccoli rabe is tender, about 10 minutes. Serve chicken and sauce over broccoli rabe, with bread.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN. | **SERVES:** 4

Creamy Baked Tortellini With Spinach

- **½ cup panko breadcrumbs**
- **½ ounce Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated (⅓ cup)**
- **1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest**
- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
- **2 teaspoons all-purpose adobo seasoning, such as Goya, divided**
- **10 ounces fresh or frozen cheese tortellini**
- **Kosher salt**
- **12 ounces ground turkey**
- **2 cups marinara sauce, such as Rao's**
- **2 ounces cream cheese (¼ cup)**
- **1 bunch flat-leaf spinach (5 ounces), tough stems trimmed, or 3 cups baby spinach**

1. Preheat oven to 450°. Stir together panko, Parmigiano, lemon zest, 1 tablespoon oil, and 1 teaspoon adobo. Cook tortellini in a large pot of salted boiling water 2 minutes; drain.

2. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high. Add turkey and remaining 1 teaspoon adobo. Cook, stirring, until meat is browning in spots but not cooked through, about 4 minutes. Stir in marinara and bring to a boil, then stir in cream cheese until melted, about 2 minutes. Add tortellini and spinach, stirring until it's just wilted. Sprinkle with panko mixture and bake until bubbly, about 8 minutes. Serve immediately.

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 35 MIN. | **SERVES:** 4

Very Veggie Fried Rice With Eggs

- **4 tablespoons vegetable oil, divided**
- **3 cups shredded kale (from 1 small bunch)**
- **4 ounces zucchini (or broccoli or green beans), chopped (1 cup)**
- **Kosher salt**
- **4 teaspoons minced fresh ginger (from a 1-inch piece)**
- **4 teaspoons minced garlic (from 2 cloves)**
- **2 cups cooked white rice**
- **2 teaspoons toasted sesame oil**
- **1 cup frozen carrots and peas, such as Green Giant**
- **4 large eggs**

1. Heat a large, heavy nonstick skillet over high. Swirl in 1 tablespoon vegetable oil; add kale and zucchini. Season with salt and cook, stirring, until zucchini is bright green and kale is wilted, about 3 minutes. Add ginger and garlic; cook, stirring, 30 seconds. Add rice and 2 tablespoons vegetable oil; cook, stirring to break up rice, 1 minute. Stir in sesame oil and carrots and peas; season and cook 1 minute.

2. Make 4 wells in mixture; divide remaining 1 tablespoon vegetable oil among them. Crack an egg into each well; season. Reduce heat to medium and cook until whites begin to set, about 3 minutes. Cover, turn off heat, and let stand until whites are set but yolks are still soft, 3 to 4 minutes more. Serve immediately.

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 35 MIN. | **SERVES:** 4

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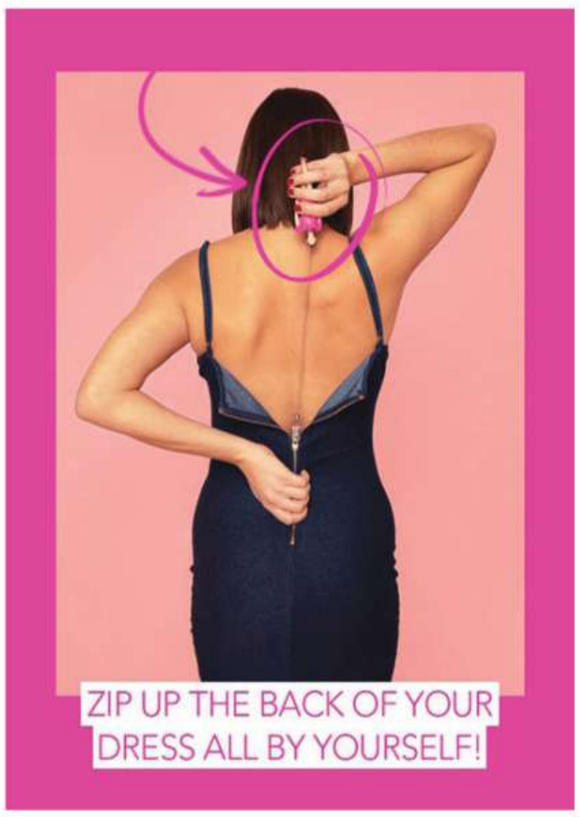

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See how food influencer Karen Tedesco of **Familystyle Food** created a delicious holiday recipe using **Kikkoman® Soy Sauce** at **marthastewart.com/kikkoman**

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| HEALTHY APPETITE |

SQUEEZE THIS IN

An orange a day keeps the winter blues away—that's our mantra this time of year. The sunny citrus fruit is bursting with immune-supporting polyphenols and vitamin C, and it delivers big on hydration and fiber, too. Swirl, section, or supreme it into our quick recipes (including a nostalgia-packed smoothie), and replenish your zest for life.

TEXT BY LAURYN TYRELL RECIPES BY RILEY WOFFORD

Blending two peeled oranges with their pith intact gives our ode to an Orange Julius its fiber, which is essential for healthy digestion, says Charleston, South Carolina, registered dietitian Lauren Manaker.

FOOD STYLING BY GREG LOFTS; PROP STYLING BY SUZIE MYERS

PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICO SCHINCO

This bright-orange relish is a perfect accompaniment to pan-seared salmon, but it's also great on grilled chicken cutlets, or tossed into a salad with cooked grains and feta.

MAJOR A-PEEL
Don't toss that rind! Just 1 teaspoon of zest can fuel your body with micronutrients needed to combat disease and help reduce inflammation, says Manaker.

3 | A Cool Condiment
Orange-Fennel-Olive Relish

"Fennel is a natural source of iron, and olives (and their oil) provide vitamin E, which supports healthy skin," says Manaker.

Grate 1 teaspoon zest, then remove peel and pith from 2 **oranges.** Holding fruit above a bowl, use a small paring knife to cut between membranes and remove segments. Squeeze 1 tablespoon juice from membranes into bowl. Cut segments into bite-size pieces; add to bowl with ½ cup thinly sliced **fennel,** 12 chopped **oil-cured olives,** ¼ cup torn **fresh mint leaves,** and 1 teaspoon **extra-virgin olive oil.** Season with **kosher salt** and freshly ground **pepper;** serve.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN. | **MAKES:** 1½ CUPS

"Enjoy oranges shortly after buying them, since the nutrients degrade over time. Keep them on your counter for two to three days, or in the fridge for up to two weeks."

— registered dietitian Lauren Manaker

1 | A Zesty Breakfast
Orange-Vanilla Shake

Each refreshing sip offers calcium and vitamins C and D.

Grate ¼ teaspoon zest, then peel and halve 2 **oranges** and remove any seeds. Place fruit in a blender with 1 cup **ice,** ½ cup **milk,** 1 teaspoon **pure vanilla extract,** and reserved zest. Purée until smooth and frothy; serve immediately.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 5 MIN. | **SERVES:** 2

2 | A Satisfying Snack
Yogurt-Dipped Mandarins

Greek yogurt is a good source of protein, and cinnamon lends sweetness without added sugar.

Peel 2 **small oranges** or **tangerines** and pull apart segments; discard any white pith. Whisk ¼ cup **plain Greek yogurt** to loosen, then dip segments halfway into yogurt. Freeze on a parchment-lined baking sheet 10 minutes; sprinkle with **ground cinnamon** and serve.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 15 MIN.
SERVES: 2 TO 4

These meringue kisses are first dipped in chocolate, then in chopped toasted pecans or pistachios. For the recipe, see page 103.

| HOMESCHOOL |

How to Be a Better Baker

Our food editors have made hundreds—no, thousands—of holiday cookies and confections over the years, and picked up plenty of tricks along the way. Turn the page for a big batch of time-tested (and retested) wisdom, from their flour-dusted kitchens to yours.

TEXT BY JENNY COMITA

GREATEST HITS

Hover your phone camera here to get our editors' favorite holiday-cookie recipes, or go to *marthastewart.com/testkitchenfavoritecookies*.

PHOTOGRAPH BY ANITA CALERO

EVEN MOM WILL SAY, “THIS TASTES LIKE MOM’S.”

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1

Measure Precisely

Sounds pretty basic, but it's the bottom line for good results. Baking is as much chemistry as it is art, so don't eyeball it. Use a handled dry-measure cup for dry ingredients, but not as a scoop: Instead, spoon flour into it and pile it above the rim, then sweep the top with a knife to level it, sending the excess back into the canister. For wet ingredients, use clear, spouted cups and the old high school chem-lab move: Lower yourself to eye level with the lines for accuracy.

2. Heed the Room-Temperature Rule (Worth It!)

For properly creamed cookie dough, your eggs need to be room temp and your butter softened. Ideally, you can leave them on a counter for a few hours before baking, but if time doesn't permit, try these speedy cheats:

EGGS Fill a medium-size bowl with warm water, and let them sit in it for 5 to 10 minutes. They're good to go when they no longer feel chilled to the touch after you remove them.

BUTTER Place a stick on a small plate and microwave it on low power in five-second increments, flipping it from side to side as you go and checking frequently to make sure it isn't starting to liquefy.

3. WHISK, DON'T SIFT

Older recipes often call for sifting dry ingredients to thoroughly combine them, aerate the mixture, and get rid of clumps. But whisking works just as well, and saves you from hand cramps. The one exception is cake flour: It tends to stick together, so we shake it through a sieve while lightly tapping the side.

4. NAIL THE TIMING

When you're prepping multiple batches and/or recipes, it's easy to lose track of when something needs to come out of the oven (or the fridge, if you're chilling dough). That's why we rely on multiple timers. Set them on your phone or smart-home device; we find they're the most reliable.

"I plan my treat boxes with balance in mind. A 'perfect' box has chewy, crunchy, and tender textures (and sometimes something creamy, like a fudge or truffle), and a mix of spice, chocolate, and fruit. I like to combine interesting shapes, too: irregular drop cookies, rolled-and-cut sugar or gingerbread cookies, and biscotti."

—editorial food director Sarah Carey

5. Take Precise Temps

Buy an oven thermometer and replace it once a year (they get less accurate over time). To cook sugar for candies or fry sufganiyot for Hanukkah, you'll need a candy (sometimes labeled "deep-fry") thermometer. To check its accuracy, place it in a small pot of water and bring it to a boil. It should always read 212° F at sea level (the boiling point is lower at higher elevations; check your altitude). If not, buy a new one.

6

Roll Dough With Ease

The trick for cookie dough is placing it between two sheets of floured parchment paper and rolling it out immediately after mixing, when it's at peak pliability. First, flour a piece of parchment and lay the mound of dough on top. Dust the dough with flour and place the second piece of parchment on top. Roll until the dough starts to stick to the paper, then lift the parchment off it, dust with a bit more flour, and replace the paper. Flip the entire package over and repeat these steps on the other side. Continue until the dough reaches your desired thickness.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY REN FULLER (SPATULA), COURTESY OF NORDICWARE (BAKING SHEET), LENNART WEIBULL (OTHERS); ILLUSTRATIONS BY BROWN BIRD DESIGN

7. Mix Sizes of Sugar

This decorating secret prevents bald spots and deposits extra sparkle: Combine two different sanding sugars, fine and coarse. Roll a slice-and-bake log in the mixture for glittery edges, or dust it on round cookies or spritzes with your fingers, like you're sprinkling salt. Sarah likes to use unexpected colors, like hot pink or metallic silver, to jazz up her gift boxes.

8. Stay in Shape

We have trusty techniques for picture-perfect cookies every time. Here they are for four classic recipe types.

SLICE-AND-BAKE For rounds like our shortbread on page 97, snip down the length of an empty paper-towel tube, put the dough inside, and tape shut so it holds a cylinder shape (i.e., doesn't flatten on the bottom side) while chilling. After slicing, reshape the rounds into neat circles if needed.

DROP Grab an ice cream scoop. It makes quick work of measuring and ensures consistently sized cookies. Bonus tip: Freeze scooped balls in a single layer and transfer them to freezer bags for dessert on demand (add a few minutes of baking time).

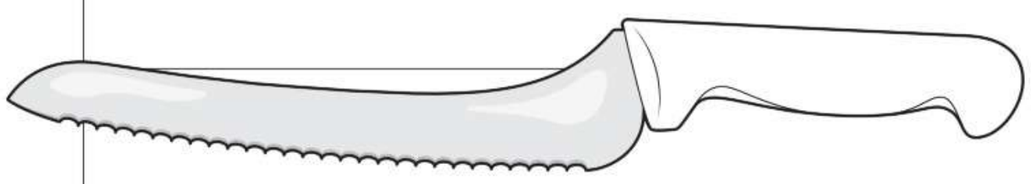
COOKIE-CUTTER The key to clean edges is chilling the dough twice: Once after rolling it and again after stamping out the shapes. Halfway through baking, take the pans out, bang them a few times on the counter, and return them to the oven. This flattens the cookies for easy decorating.

THUMBPRINT Press a finger in to make indentations. Halfway through baking, reshape each one with the handle of a large wooden spoon to ensure deep, round wells for the jam.

9

Do the Shuffle

For even results (no pale, sad strays), always rotate cookie sheets from top rack to bottom (if using more than one at a time) and back to front halfway through baking time. Also, you don't have to make your cookies the exact size called for in the recipe, but if you deviate, start with a small test batch to gauge the proper cooking time.



10. Yes, You Pecan!

Follow our quick primer to prep nuts like a pro.

TASTE THEM You'd be surprised how quickly nuts go rancid. To prevent that bitter end, store them in the refrigerator or freezer, and always try one before you start a recipe.

TOAST THEM This enhances their flavor and aroma. Arrange them in a single layer on a baking sheet, then bake at 350° until fragrant and golden all the way through, 10 to 12 minutes (check often!), or a bit longer if they started frozen.

CHOP THEM The test kitchen's favorite tool for the job is an offset serrated knife. The notches make quick work of craggy nuts (and chocolate, too), and the raised handle keeps fingers clear of your work surface.

11. TO TEMPER OR NOT TO TEMPER?

Slowly heating and cooling chocolate while stirring it provides a snappy texture and a beautifully shiny, professional appearance. It also results in a longer-lasting treat: Candy made with tempered chocolate (or cookies dipped in it) can sit at room temperature without developing a white coating, known as a bloom. The process isn't hard (see page 104), but it takes time and precision—and requires a special thermometer—so over the years, bakers have come up with shortcuts that approximate the results. The simplest: Stir a tablespoon of shortening into 12 ounces of melted chocolate; confections made with this combination should be refrigerated to avoid blooming.

12. GET GOOD GEAR

A few inexpensive additions can make all the difference.

ALUMINUM COOKIE SHEETS
First, a few features to avoid: rimmed sheets, which inhibit air circulation and hold fewer cookies; nonstick coatings, which can burn bottoms due to their darker color; and insulated ones, which can slow baking times. We love **Nordicware**'s Naturals Large Classic ($19, *nordicware.com*).

NONSTICK BAKING MATS
Parchment paper prevents stuck-on cookies and makes cleanup a snap. So do **Silpat** mats, but they're dishwasher-safe and last for ages ($24 each, *webstaurantstore.com*).

ULTRATHIN COOKIE SPATULA
A must for delicate cookies (it's great for frying eggs, too). Our favorite, #1352 by **Ateco,** has a super-flexible stainless steel blade that slides right under baked goods ($5, *webstaurantstore.com*).

PROMOTION

RED ALERT

FOUR PERFECT SHADES GOT YOU COVERED

SNAP TO BUY

InStyle

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December

"The world is encouraged to come away from rancor,
Come the way of friendship."

—**Maya Angelou, *Amazing Peace: A Christmas Poem***

PHOTOGRAPH BY LUCAS ALLEN

Another truly exceptional year is coming to an end, and we're ready to toast the season in kind. On the following pages, get inspired to bring the fun to any scenario. Say, "Cheers!" to book club with a tropical sparkling punch. Get convivial over crispy bites or a molten cheese dip. Sit down with your inner circle to a marvelous main. Or fête friends by serving a snowy chocolate cake or warm sips around the firepit. Because the whole point is to . . .

Gather 'Round

PHOTOGRAPHS BY
Lennart Weibull

TEXT BY
Amy Scattergood

RECIPES BY
Greg Lofts

GATHER 'ROUND...

the punch bowl

SPARKLING GINGER-AND-SPICE RUM PUNCH

For all the recipes in this story, see page 104.

Crate & Barrel Britta Optic punch bowl, *3 gal., $40, crateandbarrel.com.*

Nothing jump-starts a little soirée like an over-the-top pour—and it doesn't get more OTT than this heady, Caribbean-inspired cocktail of black spiced rum with splashes of prosecco, ginger beer, and seltzer. Star-anise pods are a buoyant touch, as is an island of orange sherbet; lime and fresh ginger slices wheel through the bubbles and add even more zing to the mix. A word to the wise: The float looks sweet and innocent, but this aperitif can pack a wallop, thanks to a cup of the rum (we like Kraken or Captain Morgan), which has lovely hints of oak and molasses that play well with the ginger and orange.

Crispy, golden snacks are a glorious addition to a holiday mixer, as they honor Hanukkah (oil celebrates the enduring light of the menorah) and are totally irresistible. The burnished bundles are vegetable fritters made from carrots, zucchini, and leeks—our fanciful riff on potato latkes. For the croquettes, cold-smoked salmon or tinned red salmon is bound with mashed potatoes and egg yolks and coated with panko. And you'll swear the spinach-feta patties are bites of creamed spinach. Two dipping sauces, one of curried sour cream and one of canned tomato sauce, garlic, and lemon juice, go well with all the goods.

THREE-CHEESE ARTICHOKE-AND-SUN-DRIED-TOMATO DIP

GATHER 'ROUND . . .

the cheesy dip

There's something wonderfully comforting and neighborly about a bowl of warm, melty cheese dip, especially if you bring back—and break out—the fondue pot. This recipe blends cream cheese, Colby Jack, and Parmigiano for a serious belt of flavor. Stir in chopped marinated artichoke hearts and sun-dried tomatoes before the dish finishes in the oven, for both texture and seasoning, and it becomes almost a meal in itself. Hearty crackers and crudités are good accompaniments—this bubbling-hot dish is a lot of things, but it isn't dainty.

PORK RIB ROAST WITH APPLES, FENNEL, AND POTATOES

A French-cut rib roast is regal and festive, especially when encrusted with herbs and served whole on a bed of caramelized apples, fennel, onions, and baby potatoes. The stroke of genius is slathering a wet rub of Dijon and soy sauce and a thicket of said herbs over the pork and letting it marinate on the counter. This allows the meat to come to room temperature before going in the oven, which helps it cook more evenly. The vegetables roast underneath, basting in the fat and flavor. A sweet tip: Use cipollini onions if you can, and don't peel them. Their skins act like steamer jackets, so they get incredibly tender.

SAFFRON-AND-ORANGE-SCENTED SEAFOOD STEW

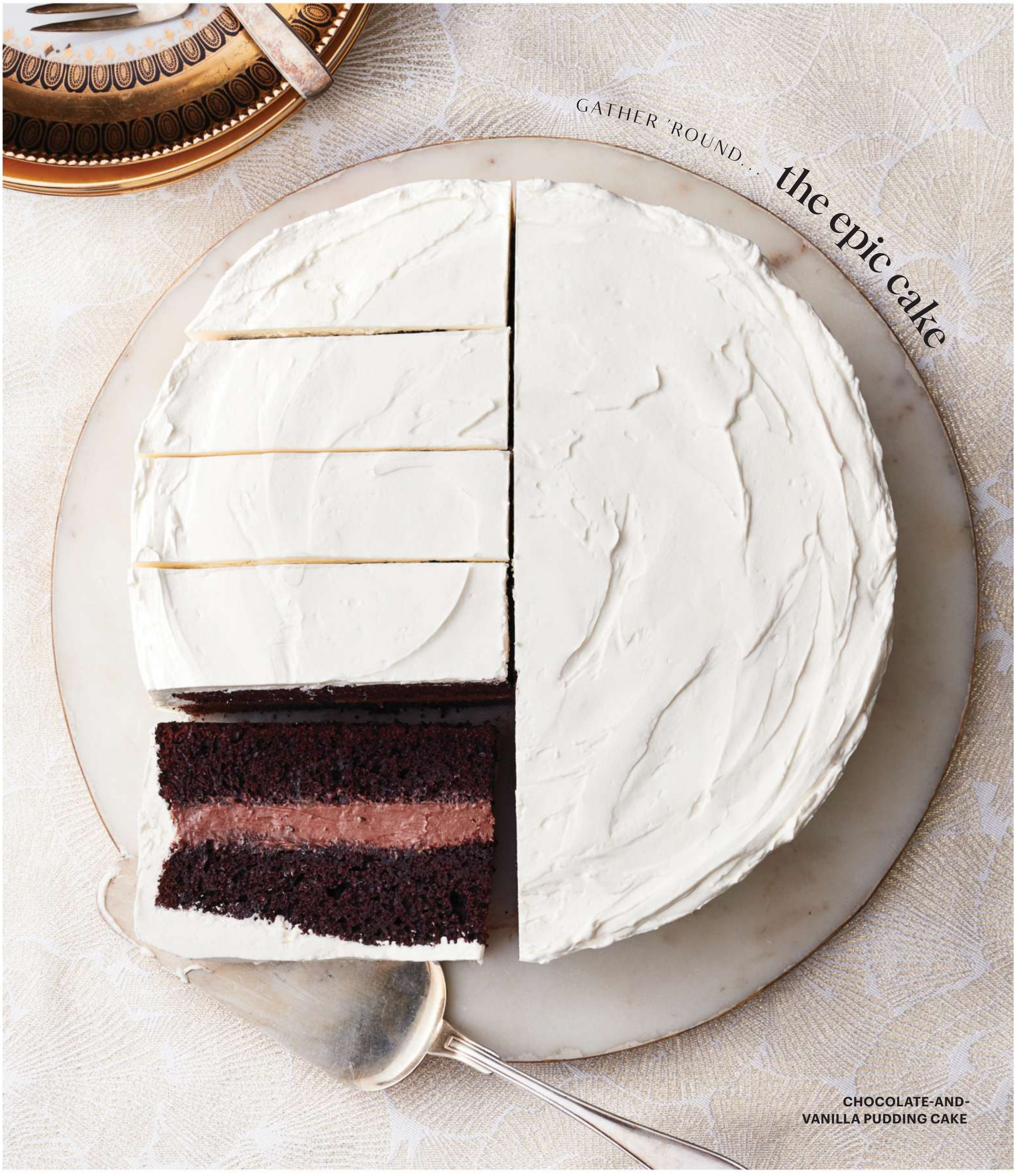
GATHER 'ROUND... **the seafood stew**

Duparquet handmade two-handled copper sauté pan, *duparquet.com.*

Honor the Italian-American Feast of the Seven Fishes with a pot of seafood stew perfumed with orange and saffron. This version switches out pricey lobster and scallops for just-as-refined shrimp and white fish, so you can spend extra on a few threads of fresh saffron and the best seafood stock you can find. The flavor is designed to be delicate—you want the star ingredients to shine—and built from a few classic techniques. Make a quick broth from the shrimp shells, bloom the saffron, and add the orange zest and juice late in the game for brightness. Quick herby toasts let you soak up the amazing broth—don't skimp on the stick of butter, or the garlic.

GATHER 'ROUND...

the epic cake



CHOCOLATE-AND-VANILLA PUDDING CAKE

An old-fashioned layer cake conjures a winter wonderland when topped with white-chocolate buttercream as pale and thick as a fresh snowbank. Despite its black-tie formal appearance, this is a very pragmatic dessert. The dump-and-stir recipe bakes up light and doesn't flake off, so there's no need for a crumb coat when you frost it. And it's even better when you make it in advance: The milk-chocolate pudding in the middle and the icing have plenty of time to set, so the flavors intensify. Keep this confection in the refrigerator until go time, and enjoy being the center of attention when you slice it.

ART DIRECTION BY JAMES MAIKOWSKI; FOOD STYLING BY GREG LOFTS; PROP STYLING BY TANYA GRAFF

1. **CANDY-CANE HOT COCOA**

2. **HONEY-BUTTERED HOT TODDY**

Host an evening around the firepit, with nightcaps for every wassailer. To gussy up a traditional hot toddy (made with whiskey, honey, lemon, and hot water), whisk some butter and spices into the honey. Use high-quality ingredients—orange-blossom or clover honey, cultured butter, vanilla paste, and a little pour of Cointreau—then add slices of lemon and stir with a cinnamon stick. For non-imbibers, go team cocoa. Heat a pan of milk with chopped white chocolate and a bit of peppermint extract. Whisk it until it's thick and frothy, then top with a dollop of whipped cream and a candy-cane garnish—we hear that's customary at the North Pole.

DIY IDEA NO.

1

Happy Feet

Don’t just hang the stockings with care; craft them with love. For this super-jolly pair, we opted for holidays-lite coral and honeydew felt, and added contrast stitching on the stars. But you can choose any colors or shapes that make you want to kick up your heels. For all the how-tos in this story, turn to page 86.

H·E·A·R·T F·E·L·T

Why does this material always leave us feeling so warm and fuzzy? It's easy to work with (whether you sew it or glue it), and it comes in a preschool cupboard's worth of colors and precut shapes. Our simple ideas lend themselves to hands both big and small, and will make your home cozy, merry, and bright.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LENNART WEIBULL • TEXT BY JENNIFER FERNANDEZ

DIY IDEA NO.

2

Stay Puffs

Homemade felt ornaments look sweet adorning this delicate white pine—and are a smart alternative to fragile glass ones if you have kids and pets running around. The soft designs also add a festive touch when hung from doorknobs, windowsills, or mantelpieces, and make cute keepsake gift tags, too.

DIY IDEA NO.

3

Trunk Show

The benefits of this no-sew tree skirt are threefold: It hides unsightly stands, protects floors from sticky pine needles, and does it all with stylish cheer. Since the starburst pattern is just made with varying lengths of felt ribbon that are easily attached with iron-on adhesive, it's a foolproof way to festoon your evergreen.

DIY IDEA NO.

4

Fun for Days

Build excitement all month with an oversize Advent calendar. The felt pockets, marked with precut numbers, are big enough to hold little gifts—from notebooks to yo-yos to mini candy boxes—and you can modify the design to fit different occasions. Pack eight pockets for the nights of Hanukkah, or a week's worth for the lead-up to a monumental birthday any time of year.

HANDMADE HOW-TOS

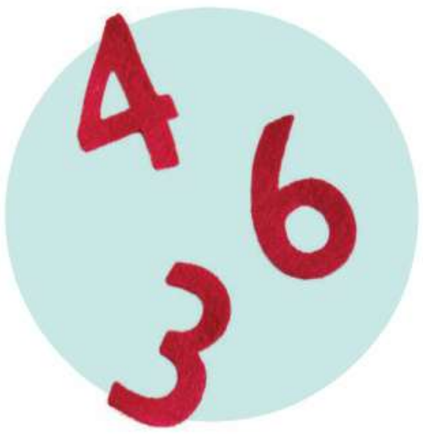
In addition to the materials on these pages, you'll need sharp scissors, a strong needle, and heavy thread for these projects. Optional: an elf or two, if Santa can spare them.

For the Stockings and Ornaments

Appliqué Flowers die-cut felt stars, *in White, $5 for 12, appliqueflowers.etsy.com.* **Over the River Felt circles,** *in assorted colors, 2", $4 for 32; and 3", $4.75 for 27, overtheriver felt.etsy.com.* **MagiCuts felt trees,** *in Red and Lime, $2.50 for 10, magicuts.shop.*

For the Tree Skirt

Wool felt ribbon, *in Early Spring, Honeydew, Red, and Mint (not shown, but used on our tree skirt), ½", $2.25 for 2 yd.; and ¾", $3 for 2 yd., thefeltpod.etsy.com.*



For the Advent Calendar

Felt-Fetti Countdown numbers, *in Red and Fern, $9 for 100 pieces or 2 sets of numbers 1–30, benziedesign.com.*

DIY IDEA NO.

1

Star Stocking

1. GET THE PATTERN
Download the template at *marthastewart.com/holidaystocking*, print it on 2 sheets of 8½-by-11-inch paper, and cut it out. With tailor's chalk, trace it onto 2 pieces of felt; we used 1.2-millimeter, which is sturdy enough to hold stuffers. Cut both out and set one aside.

2. SEW ON THE STARS
Attach precut stars (shown, top left) to the front of one piece with a running stitch and thread in a color that matches the stocking, maintaining a ⅛-inch border. Take care not to sew any closer to the edge than ⅜ inch.

3. ADD THE BACK
Place the stocking pieces one on top of the other, stars-side facing up, and sew them together with a running stitch, maintaining a ½-to-⅜-inch border from the edge.

4. ATTACH THE LOOP
Cut a piece of sturdy cotton ribbon to the desired length (we went with 7 inches, for a 3.5-inch loop). Fold it in half and sew the ends to the top-right seam of the stocking.

THE DETAILS: Pure wool felt, *12" by 18", in Salmon and Agave, $6 each, benziedesign.com.*

DIY IDEA NO.

2

Soft Ornaments

1. MATCH UP SHAPES
Gather pairs of felt shapes (shown, far left), or cut 2- and 3-inch individual circles from 1.2-millimeter felt, as we did. If you're making solid ornaments without added trim, like the stars and trees shown on page 84, skip to step 3.

2. ADD EMBELLISHMENTS
For the circle ornament, center a 2-inch felt disk on one of the 3-inch rounds and, using thread in a contrasting color, sew the small circle onto the larger one with two or three intersecting cross-stitches to form a little star in the middle.

3. SEW SHAPES TOGETHER
Cut a 7-inch length of ribbon and fold to make a loop. Place corresponding felt shapes on top of each other, embellished-sides facing up, sandwiching the ribbon at the top. Sew around the edge of the ornament with a running stitch ⅛ to 3⁄16 inch in from the edge, leaving a 1½-inch opening.

4. FILL IT UP
Stuff the ornament with wool or polyester filling, and stitch the opening closed.

THE DETAILS: Pure wool felt, *12" by 18", in Salmon and Agave, $6 each, benziedesign.com.*

DIY IDEA NO.

3

Ribbon Tree Skirt

1. MAKE THE SKIRT
Fold a 60-inch square of 1.2-millimeter felt fabric into a 30-by-60-inch rectangle. Cut a 30-inch piece of string and tie it to a pencil to make a compass. Holding the end of the string at the top center of the fabric rectangle, and the pencil at either corner, draw an even, curved line from one side of the rectangle to the other. Repeat to make a smaller center opening, using a length of string that's about 2 inches longer than half the width of your tree's trunk. Cut the fabric along the lines, then unfold and cut a slit from the center opening to the outer edge.

2. ADD THE RIBBON DESIGN
Cut varying lengths of ½- and ¼-inch-wide felt ribbon (shown, far left). Affix using iron-on bonding adhesive, alternating colors and lengths in a sunburst pattern. For a more permanent hold that will last several holiday seasons, sew on the ribbons. You can also stitch or iron on precut shapes (shown, top left) to create your own design.

THE DETAILS: 100 percent wool craft felt, *in White, $30 a yd., thefeltstore.com.* **HeatnBond Ultra Hold iron-on adhesive,** *$5, joann.com.*

DIY IDEA NO.

4

Advent Calendar

1. CREATE THE BACKDROP
Cut a 36-by 45-inch rectangle out of 3-millimeter felt that's strong enough to hold small gifts. Trim five 1-by-7-inch strips for hanging.

2. FASHION POCKET SQUARES
Cut 24 pieces of 5-by-10-inch felt rectangles. Fold each in half vertically, so they're 5-inch squares.

3. SECURE THE POCKETS
Gather the 24 squares and arrange them in 4 rows of 6, ensuring a 2-inch border of free space around each edge. Attach the pockets with a running stitch ⅛ inch from the left and right edges, leaving the bottom edges unsewn and the top edges open. Glue precut numbers (shown, opposite, far left) onto the pockets with fabric glue.

4. ATTACH THE STRAPS
Take the five strips and pin each to the front and back of the top edge of the base, overlapping by 1 inch on the ends. Sew the ends onto the base with a heavy thread and needle, using a running stitch in a small rectangular pattern. Once the straps are sewn on, hang the calendar from a curtain rod and brackets (we used a wooden dowel and Shaker pegs).

THE DETAILS: Wool craft felt, *in White, $30 a yd., thefeltstore.com.* **The Felt Pod wool felt rolls,** *5" by 36", in Red, Mineral Green, Mint, Baby Pink, Beige Skin, and Aqua Mist, $5.25 each, thefeltpod.etsy.com.* **Wooden dowel,** *½" by 48", $2.75, homedepot.com.* **Woodpeckers wooden ball beads,** *1½", 50¢ each; and* **Shaker peg with #10 screw,** *$1.25, woodpeckers crafts.com.*

COOL TIDINGS

Turn blank card stock into sparkling holiday greetings with these die-cut felt snowflakes in glacial shades. Enliven them with glitter (if you wish) and your handwritten message.

DIY IDEA NO.

5

Frosted Flakes

1. PREP THE PAPER
Start with a card that can stand up to glue, or, if you want to add a background color, paint. Paint the card, add text, and glue on glitter—or keep it plain, depending on the design you dream up.

2. EMBELLISH WITH FELT
Attach precut felt shapes using spray adhesive. The pieces come in all shapes, sizes, and colors; we opted for pastel-blue snowflakes. Let dry completely before slipping into envelopes.

THE DETAILS: Strathmore watercolor cards, *3½" by 4⅞", $6 for 10, dick blick.com.* **Wool Hearts die-cut felt snowflakes,** *in Baby Blue and Blue Snow, $10 for 15, woolhearts.etsy.com.* **Scotch spray mount adhesive,** *$14 for 10.25 oz., amazon.com.*

ART DIRECTION BY RYAN MESINA; STYLING BY LORNA ARAGON

ALL THAT *Glitters*

Come December, Kevin Sharkey decorates his modernist Manhattan apartment with displays that sparkle and shine to the nines. He shares his exuberant vision—and a few of his top styling and entertaining secrets, too.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY STEPHEN KENT JOHNSON
TEXT BY DAN SHAW

HIGH STYLE

After Kevin oversaw the design of Martha's prelit Christmas trees, he had one made to skim his apartment's extra-tall ceilings. It was a revelation not to have to find the perfect real tree each winter—and there's never a bad angle or bald spot.

***Opposite*: To create a wreath to hang above his bar, he wired inexpensive rhinestone snowflake ornaments and jeweled crystal drops to a 30-inch form he'd spray-painted silver. (The tree, available in four heights, and ornaments can be found at *martha.com*.)**

EVERY YEAR, Kevin Sharkey devotes pretty much an entire December weekend to decorating the 14-foot tree that grazes the ceiling of his sleek New York City apartment overlooking the Hudson River. "You'd think it would take longer because the tree is so tall, but it actually goes by pretty quickly," he says. Moreover, he enjoys every minute of it, and his efforts are fueled by the excitement of good times—and good friends—to come. There's a thoughtful method to his yuletide madness, too. He stores his ornaments in bins organized by type, then arranges similar ones in groups before hanging them. "It's a great exercise of all my styling muscles and instincts," he says. "I want it to look like it's encrusted in baubles." And to that end, he goes for it. "Sometimes more is more."

Kevin, currently the executive vice president and executive design director of the Martha Stewart brand, has been flexing those muscles for decades. For more than 25 years, he has styled rooms, photo shoots, and flowers by Martha's side. His tree drips with memories, in the form of ornaments he's amassed over his time with the brand, including from Martha's original holiday collections for Kmart, the old Martha by Mail catalog, and the current line for Martha.com. "They range from the cheapest plastic snowflakes to glass pinecones. They mix with pieces I bought at Liberty of London and, of course, Jamali Garden," he says of the New York City floral-and-event-supply mecca. "I typically stick to gold, silver, pearls, or clear—things that catch the light."

He does the same when setting the bar and table for his annual get-together with friends—and wrapping presents. "While I love double-faced satin ribbons, which are the most luxurious in the world, I really have a soft spot for those synthetic bows that come 10 or 20 to a bag—they're like the carnations of gift-wrapping," he says, referring to his favorite flower. One of his go-to tricks is nestling two self-adhesive bows together and snipping the loops with scissors to create a topper that's as frilly as a peony.

If Kevin pulls out all the stops at Christmastime, well, that's the entire point. "I share it with the people I love, so I really go to that extra level of effort," he says. "And having the same palette for the tree, paper, and ribbons is just a nice way of completing the package—no pun intended. It makes everything hang together so beautifully."

WINTRY WELCOME

***Left*: In his foyer, Kevin hangs a bough of fresh evergreen clippings ("I love the smell!"), embellished with glass pinecones and a metallic ribbon bow saved from a photo shoot. The godfather to 10 children, including Martha's grandkids, "Uncle Kevin" piles silver-painted boxes shaped like walnuts on a Georg Jensen silver tray. They're filled with little gifts, like keychains, jacks, and candy, for when they visit. *Above*: Kevin pulls silver pieces for the table.**

ART DIRECTION BY RYAN MESINA; STYLING BY KEVIN SHARKEY

FROND ALOHA

"Pineapples are a universal symbol of welcome," says Kevin of his tropical centerpieces. He orders Maui Gold pineapples from Hawaii (*maui.gold*), embellishes the foliage with large epiphytes (aka air plants), and rests them on stacked silver cake stands laden with kumquats, grapefruits, tangerines, pomelos, lemons, and Meyer lemons: "When I was a kid, I always got citrus in my Christmas stocking."

SHINING EXAMPLES

"As contemporary as my place is, there are things about old-world entertaining I really admire," Kevin says. He sets his ebonized table with monogrammed linen napkins, vintage mother-of-pearl knives, and old English hexagonal china plates topped by hotel-silver domes. A self-described "salt-aholic," he places individual glass salt and pepper cellars at each setting, along with a silver dish holding a marzipan clementine for a sweet treat. The glasses are Baccarat crystal.

HAPPY HOUR

When guests arrive, Kevin pours French 75 cocktails into Lobmeyr crystal coupes and sets them on a pair of Warren McArthur console tables under his DIY wreath. To raise the bar even higher, he fills mercury-glass containers with helle-bores and a mix of fresh and silver-spray-painted evergreens.

HANG TIME

Kevin likes the ease of prelit trees (no wrestling with tangled wires). He puts the largest ornaments on the branches that extend directly from the trunk. "Then I work my way out, and get smaller and smaller as I get to the ends," he says. Swags of glass silver beads come next, to add a horizontal element. "I finish with vertical shapes, like icicles."

PRETTY PACKAGES

“I love the way metallic ribbons and paper reflect light when they’re under a tree,” Kevin says. He also knows they can be challenging to fold around edges and corners. “You have to have sharp scissors, tape at the ready, and a flat, hard surface to spread out on, like a dining-room table,” he advises. Still too unwieldy? He suggests using textured metallic papers or ones with metallic details; they’re more forgiving.

THE *More,* THE *Merrier*

'Tis the season to spread cheer to friends and neighbors, colleagues and caregivers, and everyone else who made this year sweeter. These delectable homemade treats, prepped by the batch and tied with a bow, make it a cinch to present good tidings to all.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY JUSTIN WALKER
TEXT BY MICHELLE SHIH
RECIPES BY SARAH CAREY

Hand Over Happiness

When everyone's drowning in holiday sweets and cookie swaps, you swoop in with the win: frozen cookie dough for friends to slice and bake whenever the desire strikes. The secret to this rich chocolate-chunk shortbread is a mix of sugars—brown for a caramel note, and confectioners' for melt-in-your-mouth texture. Wrap it tightly in freezer paper to keep it from drying out; then, when you're ready to give it, roll it in patterned waxed paper and secure the ends with twine. Download our free, printable tags at *marthastewart.com/makeandgive*.

BROWN-SUGAR CHOCOLATE-CHUNK SHORTBREAD

For all the recipes in this story, see page 108.

PREP TIP

To give a gift that keeps on giving, precut the log and re-form it before freezing, so friends can break off (and bake off) just a few at a time.

THE DETAILS: Pink Lemonade Party food-safe waxed-paper sheets, *in Pink With White Dot, $5 for 12; and Pink Gingham, $10 for 25, pinklemonadeparty.etsy.com.* **Reynolds Kitchens freezer paper,** *$5 for 75 sq. ft., target.com.* **Hemptique #48 cord spool,** *in Dusty Pink, $8 for 62.5 m, hemptique.com.*

EASY PISTACHIO-CRANBERRY NOUGAT

Send in the Clouds

Nougat is a classic Mediterranean confection, made with egg whites, honey or sugar, and nuts, that requires fussing over a pot of molten sugar with a candy thermometer. Our express version is as simple as rice-cereal treats. You melt butter; stir in marshmallows until gooey; add dried cranberries, pistachios, and milk powder (which lends creaminess and tempers the sweetness); and then press the mixture into a pan to set. The result is an elegant treat with a soft, taffy-like chew. Nestle planks in a box lined with waxed paper so they don't stick.

Deliver Pure Delights

Everyone thrills to a box of nuts and chews, and these fancy-looking bites—artfully arranged in a reusable balsa-wood box—are fun to make, too. Use dark-chocolate melting wafers if you want to skip the tempering, then assemble dried and candied fruits (dates, figs, apricots, papaya, orange wheels) and nuts (almonds, pistachios), and start dipping and sprinkling. Whether it's a dash of toasted anise seeds, a crumble of crystallized ginger, or a drop of orange-flower water, each gem has a sophisticated little secret.

THE DETAILS: VerTerra small square box with attached lid, *6" by 6", $17, verterra.com.* **Pink Lemonade Party food-safe waxed-paper sheets,** *in Pink Stripes, $10 for 25, pinklemonadeparty.etsy.com. Opposite:* **RJ Displays kraft color paper cardboard jewelry box,** *7⅛" by 5⅛" by 1⅛", $13 for 6, amazon.com.* **Reynolds Cut-Rite waxed paper,** *$2 for 75 sq. ft., target.com.*

CHOCOLATE-DIPPED DRIED FIGS WITH ANISE SEEDS

DATE BON-BONS WITH PISTACHIO PASTE

CHOCOLATE-AND-NUT-CRUSTED CANDIED ORANGE

CHOCOLATE WITH DRIED FRUIT AND NUTS (MENDIANTS)

THE DETAILS: Ashland mini glass bottles with corks, *$2 each, michaels.com.* **Lucky Lady Craft Studio striped grosgrain ribbon,** *⅜", in Orange Cream (similar to shown), $2 for 3 yd., luckyladycraftstudio.etsy.com.*

ESPRESSO-VANILLA LIQUEUR

KUMQUAT-TANGERINE LIQUEUR

CHERRY-CINNAMON LIQUEUR

PREP TIP

When bottling this elixir, include a few of the vodka-soaked cherries from the recipe; they make exceptionally tasty cocktail garnishes.

Stir Up Some Excitement

These infused liqueurs might be the hottest hostess gifts in town. Espresso martinis are back, and a lovely way to use our espresso-vanilla option. Kumquat-tangerine makes for a divine citrus drop, and can be sipped on its own chilled, like limoncello, too. And cherry-cinnamon is fantastic in a spritz. It calls for a pound of fresh or frozen cherries; include some sour ones for nuanced flavor. Each glass bottle (cork included) makes half a dozen cocktails. Grab the labels at *marthastewart.com/makeandgive*.

PREP TIP

Keep each popcorn ball centered in the wrapping paper by twisting both ends at the same time, so it doesn't pop out of one side!

PEANUT-POPCORN BALLS

Embrace the Corny

For anyone who grew up loving Cracker Jack, Crunch 'n Munch, or Fiddle Faddle, our caramel-coated peanut-popcorn balls are like edible time machines. A little baking soda in the caramel keeps it light and lacy, and baking the balls after forming helps set and dry them, so they end up crisp, not tacky. Wrap them in plain parchment and striped waxed paper for the full bon-bon effect. One taste, and you're a kid again, feeling the warmth of the fire and the pure joy of opening gifts.

THE DETAILS: Pink Lemonade Party waxed-paper sheets, *in Pink Gingham and Orange Diagonal Stripe, $10 for 25, pinklemonadeparty.etsy.com.* **YW waxed-paper sheets,** *in Pink Stripes, $12 for 50, amazon.com.* **Hemptique #20 cord spool,** *in Cappuccino, $6 for 62.5 m, hemptique.com.*

FOOD STYLING BY SARAH CAREY; PROP STYLING BY NAOMI DEMAÑANA

The Workbook

| RECIPES AND HOW-TOS FROM THIS ISSUE |

FOOD STYLING BY SARAH CAREY; PROP STYLING BY TANYA GRAFF

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID MALOSH

GOOD THINGS

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Candied Mixed Nuts With Bitters

- 1 large egg white
- 2 tablespoons Angostura bitters
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 teaspoons kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)
- ¾ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- ½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 4 cups mixed nuts, such as almonds, cashews, and walnuts

Preheat oven to 275°. Whisk egg white with bitters in a bowl until frothy. Whisk in sugar, salt, pepper, and cinnamon; stir in nuts and toss to coat. Spread in an even layer on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake, stirring occasionally, until golden and crystallized, 45 to 60 minutes. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 week.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 1 HR., PLUS COOLING | **MAKES:** ABOUT 4 CUPS

Rosemary-Cayenne Snack Mix

- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- 2 teaspoons apple-cider vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)
- ½ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 2 tablespoons fresh rosemary leaves
- 6 cups puffed-corn cereal, such as Kix

Preheat oven to 275°. Combine butter, maple syrup, vinegar, salt, and cayenne in a large saucepan. Bring to a boil, stirring, until butter has melted and mixture is combined; remove from heat. Stir in rosemary and cereal. Spread onto a parchment-lined rimmed baking sheet and bake, stirring occasionally, until crisp and golden, 30 to 40 minutes. Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 week.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 45 MIN., PLUS COOLING | **MAKES:** ABOUT 6 CUPS

Seeded Feta Bites

- ⅓ cup toasted sesame seeds
- 1½ teaspoons ground sumac
- ½ teaspoon flaky sea salt, such as Jacobsen
- 1 pound mild feta, cut into ¾-inch cubes

Combine sesame seeds, sumac, and salt in a small bowl. To serve, use skewers or toothpicks to dip feta into seed mixture.

ACTIVE /TOTAL TIME: 5 MIN. | **SERVES:** 6 TO 8

HOW TO BE A BETTER BAKER

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Coffee-Meringue Acorns

It's best to bake these on a dry day; if it's even slightly humid, the meringues may take longer to crisp in the oven. You can dip half of them in pistachios and half in pecans, or choose just one kind of nut.

- 1¾ cups whole pecans or pistachios, or a combination
- 3 large egg whites
- ¾ cup sugar
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)
- ⅛ teaspoon cream of tartar

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- **1½ teaspoons coffee extract, such as Trablit, or 1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract**
- **6 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped**

1. If using pecans, preheat oven to 350°. Spread nuts in a single layer on a small baking sheet and bake until fragrant and golden brown throughout, 10 to 15 minutes. Let cool slightly, then finely chop. (If using pistachios, just finely chop without toasting.)

2. Reduce oven temperature to 200°. Combine egg whites and sugar in a bowl set over (but not in) a saucepan of simmering water, and whisk until sugar is dissolved and mixture is warm, about 3 minutes. Whisk in salt and cream of tartar; remove from heat.

3. Beat mixture on medium-high speed until stiff, glossy peaks form and meringue is mostly cooled, about 7 minutes. Beat in extract.

4. Fit a pastry bag with a ⅜-inch round tip (such as Ateco #804) and fill bag with meringue. Pipe meringue "kisses" 1 inch apart on parchment-lined baking sheets: For each, hold piping bag tip-down and perpendicular to baking sheet, and use even pressure to form a 1-inch round; then release and pull up to form tip. Bake until crisp on outside and able to release easily from parchment, about 1 hour, 15 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack and let cool completely.

5. Melt chocolate in a bowl set over (but not in) a saucepan of simmering water, stirring until smooth; remove from heat. Working one at a time, dip base of each meringue in chocolate, then coat base completely with nuts. Transfer to parchment-lined baking sheets and let stand until set, about 1 hour. Meringues can be stored in a cool, dry place at room temperature up to 5 days.

ACTIVE TIME: 1 HR. | **TOTAL TIME:** 3 HR., 35 MIN. | **MAKES:** ABOUT 100

Tempered Chocolate

- **¾ pound bittersweet or semisweet couverture chocolate, such as Valrhona or Callebaut, chopped**

1. Place ½ pound chocolate in a metal or other heatproof bowl. Bring a saucepan containing 2 inches of water to a simmer, then turn off heat. Set bowl of chocolate over (but not in) saucepan and let melt, stirring gently with spatula until chocolate registers 118° to 120° on a tempering thermometer. Remove bowl; cover saucepan to keep water warm.

2. Add remaining ¼ pound chocolate to bowl, stirring constantly until chocolate registers 82° on thermometer. Remove any unmelted pieces of chocolate with spatula. Line bottom of bowl with a kitchen towel and return to saucepan, stirring constantly until chocolate registers 88° to 90°. (The towel will help ensure the chocolate does not climb above 90°, which would cause it to "bloom" when set.)

3. Use immediately, stirring frequently to maintain temper and prevent streaking once chocolate hardens. If tempered chocolate thickens too much during use, place over simmering water again, stirring, 2 to 3 seconds.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 25 MIN. | **MAKES:** 1 CUP

GATHER 'ROUND

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Sparkling Ginger-and-Spice Rum Punch

- **8 ounces black spiced rum, such as Kraken or Captain Morgan, chilled**
- **4 ounces fresh lime juice (from 3 limes), chilled, plus wheels for serving**
- **16 ounces ginger beer, such as Fever-Tree or Q, chilled**
- **1 quart orange sherbet**
- **1 bottle (750 milliliters) dry sparkling white wine, such as prosecco brut, chilled**
- **16 ounces club soda or seltzer, chilled**
- **Star-anise pods and sliced fresh ginger, for serving**

Combine rum, lime juice, and ginger beer in a large punch bowl. Add sherbet and pour sparkling wine and club soda over. Top with lime wheels, star anise, and ginger; serve.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN.
SERVES: 8 TO 10

Carrot, Zucchini, and Leek Fritters

Think of these as a mixed-vegetable-medley cousin to latkes. Potato starch helps the fritters bind together, keeps them gluten-free, and ensures a super-crisp, crunchy exterior and subtle potato flavor.

- **2 medium zucchini (10 ounces), coarsely grated or finely julienned (2¾ cups)**
- **Kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal) and freshly ground pepper**
- **1 teaspoon vegetable oil, such as safflower, plus more for frying**
- **1 large leek, white and light-green parts only, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise, and thoroughly washed and drained (1¼ cups)**
- **2 medium carrots (6 ounces), peeled and coarsely grated or finely julienned (½ cup)**
- **½ cup potato starch**
- **1 large egg, beaten**
- **Flaky sea salt, such as Jacobsen, and Zesty Tomato and Curried-Sour-Cream Dipping Sauces (recipes follow), for serving**

1. In a colander, toss zucchini with ½ teaspoon kosher salt. Let drain 10 minutes, then squeeze dry. Transfer to a large bowl. Heat oil over medium in a medium heavy-bottomed skillet, such as cast iron. Add leek and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender but no color has developed, about 5 minutes. Transfer to bowl with zucchini and let cool completely. Stir in carrots, potato starch, 1 teaspoon kosher salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper to combine, then fold in egg.

2. Pour a scant ½ inch oil into skillet. Heat over medium until oil shimmers and bubbles form instantly around a breadcrumb dropped in (350° on a deep-fry thermometer). Working in batches, form mixture into golf-ball-size rounds; carefully drop into oil and flatten slightly. Fry, flipping once and adjusting heat as needed to maintain a level temperature, until crisp and golden brown, about 5 minutes. Drain on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet, then sprinkle with flaky salt; keep warm in a preheated 200° oven while frying the rest. Serve warm, with dipping sauces.

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 45 MIN.
MAKES: ABOUT 20

Salmon-and-Mashed-Potato Croquettes

- **2 russet potatoes (about 1¼ pounds), peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes**
- **Kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal) and freshly ground pepper**
- **2 large eggs, plus 2 large yolks**
- **¼ cup chopped scallion greens (whites reserved for another use)**
- **1 teaspoon grated lemon zest, plus 1 tablespoon fresh juice**
- **3 tablespoons unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **7½ ounces red salmon (1 tin) or cold-smoked salmon, drained and flaked, any skin and bones removed and discarded**

- **1½ cups panko breadcrumbs**
- **Vegetable oil, such as safflower, for frying**
- **Flaky sea salt, such as Jacobsen, and Zesty Tomato and Curried-Sour-Cream Dipping Sauces (recipes follow), for serving**

1. In a saucepan, combine potatoes and enough cold water to fully submerge them. Bring to a boil. Season with 2 teaspoons kosher salt and boil until potatoes are easily pierced with the tip of a knife, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain; let potatoes cool 5 minutes, then press through a ricer or colander and stir until smooth (or mash until smooth). Transfer to a large bowl; let cool completely.

2. Stir egg yolks, scallions, lemon zest and juice, flour, 2 teaspoons kosher salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper into mashed potatoes. Fold in salmon. Form mixture into golf-ball-size rounds, then flatten into ½-inch-thick disks. Transfer to a parchment-lined tray and refrigerate until cold, at least 2 hours or, loosely covered, up to 1 day.

3. Whisk whole eggs in a shallow bowl and season with kosher salt and pepper. Place panko in another shallow bowl and season. Pour a scant ½ inch oil into a medium heavy-bottomed skillet, such as cast iron. Heat over medium until oil shimmers and bubbles form instantly around a breadcrumb dropped in (350° on a deep-fry thermometer). Working in batches, dip croquettes in egg, allowing excess to drip back into bowl, then coat in panko, pressing to adhere. Fry, flipping once and adjusting heat as needed to maintain a level temperature, until crisp and golden brown, about 5 minutes. Drain on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet, then sprinkle with flaky salt; keep warm in a preheated 200° oven while frying the rest. Serve warm, with dipping sauces.

ACTIVE TIME: 35 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 2 HR. 40 MIN. | **MAKES:** ABOUT 20

Spinach-and-Feta Patties

- **2 bunches fresh spinach, preferably a hearty curly-leaved variety (1¼ pounds), thick stems removed**
- **1 teaspoon vegetable oil, such as safflower, plus more for frying**
- **1 medium yellow onion, halved and thinly sliced (2 cups)**
- **½ cup unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **1 large egg, beaten**
- **¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**
- **Kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal) and freshly ground pepper**
- **3 ounces feta, drained and crumbled**
- **Zesty Tomato and Curried-Sour-Cream Dipping Sauces (recipes follow), for serving**

1. Bring ½ cup water to a simmer over medium-high heat in a large skillet or saucepan. Add spinach, cover, and cook until wilted and tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Drain in a colander. When cool enough to handle, squeeze out as much moisture as possible with your hands (or use a ricer to press out excess). Coarsely chop spinach and transfer to a large bowl.

2. Heat oil in a medium heavy-bottomed skillet, such as cast iron, over medium. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until tender but no color has developed, about 6 minutes. Transfer to bowl with spinach and let cool completely. Stir in flour, egg, nutmeg, 2 teaspoons salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper. Fold in feta. Form mixture into golf-ball-size rounds, then flatten slightly into 1-inch-thick patties. Transfer to a parchment-lined tray and refrigerate until cold, at least 2 hours or, loosely covered, up to 1 day.

3. Pour a scant ½ inch oil into skillet. Heat over medium until oil shimmers and bubbles form instantly around a breadcrumb dropped in (350° on a deep-fry thermometer). Working in batches, fry, flipping once and adjusting heat as needed to maintain a level temperature, until crisp and golden brown, about 5 minutes. Drain on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet; keep warm in a preheated 200° oven while frying the rest. Serve warm, with dipping sauces.

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 2 HR. 35 MIN. | **MAKES:** ABOUT 20

Zesty Tomato Dipping Sauce

This can be made up to five days ahead, allowed to cool to room temperature, and then refrigerated in an airtight container. When ready to serve, gently reheat until warm.

- **1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 teaspoon minced garlic (1 clove)**
- **1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce**
- **1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**

Heat oil in a small saucepan or skillet over medium. When it shimmers, add garlic and cook until fragrant and just beginning to turn golden, about 2 minutes. Add tomato sauce and 2 tablespoons water; simmer 1 minute. Remove from heat, stir in lemon juice, and season to taste. Transfer to a bowl and serve warm.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN.
MAKES: ABOUT 1 CUP

Curried-Sour-Cream Dipping Sauce

This can be made without the sesame seeds up to five days ahead, and refrigerated in an airtight container. Sprinkle with the sesame seeds just before serving.

- **8 ounces sour cream (1 cup)**
- **1½ teaspoons curry powder, such as Madras**
- **Pinch of cayenne pepper**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **Toasted sesame seeds, for serving (optional)**

In a bowl, stir together sour cream, curry powder, and cayenne; season with salt and pepper. Serve sprinkled with sesame seeds.

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 5 MIN.
MAKES: ABOUT 1 CUP

Three-Cheese Artichoke-and-Sun-Dried-Tomato Dip

To keep this hot throughout a party, transfer it to a fondue pot or slow cooker after baking, or if serving from the skillet, reheat it in the oven for a few minutes.

- **2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 shallot, minced (½ cup)**
- **½ teaspoon dried oregano**
- **¼ teaspoon red-pepper flakes**
- **8 ounces cream cheese, cut into 1-inch pieces, room temperature**
- **8 ounces Colby Jack, shredded (about 2½ cups)**
- **1½ ounces Parmigiano-Reggiano, finely grated (about ⅓ cup)**
- **1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce**
- **1 jar (12 ounces) marinated artichoke hearts, drained and coarsely chopped**
- **12 sun-dried tomatoes, drained if oil-packed, coarsely chopped (⅓ cup)**
- **Kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal) and freshly ground pepper**
- **Crackers and crudités, for serving**

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Heat oil in a small heavy-bottomed skillet, such as cast iron, over medium. Add shallot and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened but not developing any color, 3 to 4 minutes. Add oregano and red-pepper flakes; cook until fragrant, about 30 seconds. Add cream

cheese and cook, stirring, until melted. Remove from heat. Stir in other cheeses, Worcestershire, artichokes, tomatoes, ½ teaspoon salt, and ¼ teaspoon pepper.

2. Transfer skillet to oven and bake until hot and bubbly, about 25 minutes. Serve warm with crackers and crudités.

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 45 MIN.
SERVES: 10 TO 12

Pork Rib Roast With Apples, Fennel, and Potatoes

- **1 bone-in pork rib roast (8 ribs; 6 to 7 pounds, depending on size), frenched, fat cap trimmed to ¼ inch thick**
- **Kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal) and freshly ground pepper**
- **⅓ cup Dijon mustard, plus more for serving**
- **3 tablespoons reduced-sodium soy sauce**
- **3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh rosemary leaves, plus 3 sprigs**
- **2 tablespoons coriander seeds, crushed**
- **2 tablespoons fennel seeds, crushed**
- **1½ pounds small potatoes (golf-ball-size), such as red bliss or fingerling**
- **1 pound unpeeled cipollini onions, or 2 medium Vidalia onions, peeled and cut into 1-inch-thick wedges**
- **3 small fennel bulbs (about 1 pound), trimmed and cut into 1-inch-thick wedges**
- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided**
- **4 sweet-tart baking apples, such as Braeburn or Honeycrisp (1¾ pounds)**

1. Score rib-roast fat cap with the tip of a paring knife in opposite directions, to create a ½-inch crosshatch. Prick roast all over with knife tip at approximately 1-inch intervals, about 1 inch deep. Generously season with salt and pepper, rubbing it into meat with your hands. In a bowl, stir together mustard, soy sauce, chopped rosemary, and coriander and fennel seeds. Rub mixture all over pork. Let stand at room temperature at least 1 hour and up to 2 hours, or loosely cover and refrigerate up to 1 day (return to room temperature at least 1 hour before roasting).

2. Preheat oven to 450°. In a saucepan, combine potatoes and enough cold water to fully submerge them. Bring to a boil. Season with 1 tablespoon salt and boil until tender and easily pierced with the tip of a knife, 12 to 15 minutes. Drain and let cool slightly. Using a flattened palm or the bottom of a measuring cup, flatten potatoes slightly (but keep them intact). Transfer to a large roasting pan with onions and fennel. Toss with 2 tablespoons oil, season with salt and pepper, and spread in a single layer. Scatter rosemary sprigs over vegetables. Place marinated pork in center of pan, atop vegetables.

3. Roast 15 minutes. Meanwhile, core and quarter apples and toss with remaining 1 tablespoon oil; season with salt and pepper. Reduce oven temperature to 350°. Scatter apples into pan and continue cooking until vegetables are tender and a thermometer inserted in center of roast registers at least 135°, 1 hour, 15 minutes to 1 hour, 45 minutes more, depending on size. Transfer pork to a carving board, loosely cover, and let stand 20 minutes; discard rosemary. Turn oven off and return vegetables to oven to keep warm. Carve pork and serve with vegetables and more mustard.

ACTIVE TIME: 50 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 4 HR. 5 MIN. | **SERVES:** 8 TO 12

Saffron-and-Orange-Scented Seafood Stew

Clams and mussels sold at the grocery store are often purged (flushed with fresh water to remove sand and silt trapped in their shells) and need only a brief rinse before cooking. Ask your fishmonger: If they haven't been, or you're not sure, dissolve one-third cup fine sea salt in a gallon of cold water. Submerge the shellfish in the salt water for 20 minutes, then drain.

- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided, plus more for serving**
- **2 tablespoons tomato paste**
- **1 pound large shrimp, peeled and deveined, shells reserved**
- **½ teaspoon crushed saffron threads**
- **2 celery stalks, cut into a ¼-inch dice (¾ cup), plus a handful of tender inner leaves, chopped, for serving**
- **2 shallots, chopped (1 cup)**
- **4 cloves garlic, thinly sliced (2 tablespoons)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **2 plum tomatoes, cored and cut into a ½-inch dice (1 cup)**
- **2 teaspoons fresh thyme leaves**
- **⅔ cup dry white wine, such as Sauvignon Blanc**
- **2½ pounds littleneck clams (about 24), purged and drained**
- **2 pounds mussels (about 48), purged and drained**
- **1 can (14.5 ounces) seafood or fish stock, such as Bar Harbor**
- **2 teaspoons grated orange zest, plus 3 tablespoons fresh juice**
- **1½ pounds firm, skinless white-fish fillet, such as halibut, cut into 1-inch pieces**
- **Chopped fresh parsley leaves, for serving**
- **Toasted Garlic-Butter-and-Herb Bread (recipe follows), for serving (optional)**

1. In a saucepan, heat 1 tablespoon oil over medium-high. When it shimmers, add tomato paste and shrimp shells. Cook, stirring, until shells turn pink and opaque, about 2 minutes. Add 2 cups water and gently boil 5 minutes. Strain shrimp broth into a heatproof bowl; discard solids. Stir saffron into broth.

2. Heat remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a braiser pan or wide, shallow pot over medium. Add celery, shallots, and garlic; season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Stir in tomatoes and thyme. Cover and cook until tomatoes collapse and release their juices, 6 to 8 minutes. Add wine and boil until mostly evaporated.

3. Add clams to pan, increase heat to medium-high, and cook, covered, just until they begin to open, 6 to 8 minutes (discard any that don't open). Transfer clams to a large heatproof bowl and cover with a plate to keep warm. Add mussels to pan and cook, covered, just until they begin to open, about 5 minutes (discard any that don't open). Transfer mussels to bowl with clams.

4. Add seafood stock, shrimp broth, and orange zest and juice to pan. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat; simmer 5 minutes. Meanwhile, remove about half of clams and two-thirds of mussels from their shells, reserving meat and juices and discarding empty shells. Stir shrimp and fish into pan, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook, covered, just until shrimp and fish are firm and cooked through, 3 to 5 minutes. Return shelled and in-shell clams and mussels and any accumulated juices to pan, stirring to combine. Remove

from heat, sprinkle with celery leaves and parsley, drizzle with more oil, and serve with bread.

ACTIVE TIME: 55 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 1 HR. 15 MIN. | **SERVES:** 8

Toasted Garlic-Butter-and-Herb Bread

- **1 stick unsalted butter, softened**
- **3 cloves garlic, minced (1 tablespoon)**
- **¼ cup finely chopped fresh parsley leaves**
- **¼ cup finely chopped fresh basil leaves**
- **½ teaspoon dried oregano**
- **Pinch of red-pepper flakes (optional)**
- **Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper**
- **4 mini baguettes, hoagies, or ciabatta rolls, split; or 1 large baguette or ciabatta, sliced on the bias into 1-inch-thick pieces**

Preheat broiler, with rack 6 to 8 inches below element. In a bowl, stir together butter, garlic, herbs, and red-pepper flakes; season with salt and pepper. Broil bread on a rimmed baking sheet lined with a wire rack, split-side up, until lightly toasted, 2 to 3 minutes. Divide butter mixture among toasts, spreading evenly to edges. Broil until crisp and golden brown in places and butter is sizzling, 3 to 5 minutes. Serve warm.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 15 MIN. **SERVES:** 8

Chocolate-and-Vanilla Pudding Cake

You can assemble, frost, and refrigerate this cake, loosely covered, for up to three days. (It's oil-based, so it remains light and tender when chilled, unlike butter-based ones, which become denser and firmer.) Before serving, return it to room temperature for about 20 minutes.

CAKE

- **Unsalted butter, softened, for pan**
- **¾ cup Dutch-process cocoa powder, plus more for pan**
- **1⅔ cups cake flour (not self-rising)**
- **1⅓ cups sugar**
- **¾ teaspoon baking powder**
- **¾ teaspoon baking soda**
- **1¼ teaspoons kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)**
- **2 large eggs, room temperature**
- **¾ cup buttermilk, room temperature**
- **¾ cup hot tap water**
- **2 teaspoons pure vanilla paste or extract**
- **6 tablespoons vegetable oil**

FILLING

- **⅓ cup sugar**
- **2 tablespoons cornstarch**
- **1 tablespoon Dutch-process cocoa powder**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **1½ cups whole milk**
- **2 large egg yolks (whites reserved for frosting)**
- **1 teaspoon pure vanilla paste or extract**
- **4 ounces milk chocolate, coarsely chopped (⅔ cup)**
- **2 tablespoons unsalted butter**

FROSTING

- **3 large egg whites**
- **¾ cup sugar**
- **Pinch of kosher salt**
- **1½ sticks unsalted butter, cut into tablespoons, softened**
- **3 ounces white chocolate, chopped (½ cup), melted, and cooled**

1. Cake: Preheat oven to 350°. Brush the bottom and sides of a 9-by-3-inch round springform pan with butter; line bottom with a parchment round and brush with butter. Dust parchment and sides of pan with cocoa, tapping out excess. In a large bowl, whisk together cocoa, flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, and salt to thoroughly combine. Whisk in eggs, buttermilk, hot water, vanilla, and oil. Transfer batter to prepared pan. Bake until top springs back when lightly pressed, 40 to 45 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack; let cool 20 minutes. Unlatch and remove side of pan; invert cake onto rack, remove parchment, and let cool completely.

2. Filling: In a saucepan, whisk together sugar, cornstarch, cocoa, and salt. Whisk in milk and egg yolks. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, whisking constantly; boil 1 minute. Remove from heat; whisk in vanilla, chocolate, and butter until melted and smooth. Transfer to a heatproof bowl and cover with plastic wrap, pressing it directly onto surface of pudding to prevent a skin from forming. Let cool about 10 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, trim top of cake flat with a serrated knife, then cut horizontally into two even layers. Wash and dry springform pan, return side of pan to latched position, and line bottom with a fresh parchment round. Transfer bottom cake layer, split-side up, to prepared pan. Pour filling into pan, spreading to edges of cake in an even layer with an offset spatula. Transfer top layer of cake to pan (top-side up), loosely cover, and refrigerate until cold, at least 2 hours and up to 1 day.

4. Frosting: Combine egg whites, sugar, and salt in the heatproof bowl of a mixer set over (but not in) a pan of simmering water. Heat, whisking, until mixture is hot to the touch and sugar has dissolved (it should feel smooth when rubbed between your fingers). Transfer bowl to mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium speed 5 minutes. Increase speed to medium-high and continue beating until stiff peaks form and mixture is glossy and cooled, 5 to 6 minutes more. Reduce speed to medium; beat in butter, 1 tablespoon at a time. Beat in white chocolate until thick and smooth (if frosting seems thin, it was too warm when butter and chocolate were added; refrigerate until cool and beat again before using).

5. Unlatch and remove side of pan from chilled cake. Use an offset spatula to smooth any filling protruding from middle along side of cake. Line the edges of a cake plate or stand with strips of parchment. Transfer cake to plate or stand. Spoon frosting onto top of cake and spread evenly over top and sides with an offset spatula. Discard parchment strips and refrigerate cake until icing is set, at least 20 minutes or, loosely covered, up to 3 days. Slice and serve.

ACTIVE TIME: 45 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 4 HR. 20 MIN. | **SERVES:** 12 TO 16

Candy-Cane Hot Cocoa

Whole milk creates a thicker, creamier froth than low-fat and skim milks. For a plant-based alternative, oat milk, such as Oatly, also creates a rich froth.

- **32 ounces whole milk or oat milk**
- **6 ounces white chocolate, chopped (¼ cup)**
- **Pinch of kosher salt**
- **½ teaspoon peppermint extract**
- **Unsweetened whipped cream and candy canes or peppermint sticks, for serving**

Heat milk and white chocolate in a large saucepan over medium heat, stirring until chocolate melts and mixture is smooth. Continue cooking, whisking constantly, until very hot, thick, and frothy,

3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat; whisk in peppermint extract. Transfer to cups or mugs, dollop with whipped cream, and serve with candy canes (the candy serves as a stirring stick and also slowly dissolves into the hot cocoa, adding more peppermint flavor as you sip and repeat).

ACTIVE/TOTAL TIME: 10 MIN. | **SERVES:** 4

Honey-Buttered Hot Toddies

The honey butter can be refrigerated in an airtight container for up to a week, or frozen for up to a month. We like the smooth taste of blended whiskey in this sip, but for more robust flavor, you can use bourbon or rye; or, for a slightly smoky note, try Scotch or mezcal. For a nonalcoholic version, omit the whiskey and swap the triple sec for an equal amount of fresh orange juice.

- **1 stick unsalted butter, softened**
- **¼ cup clover or orange-blossom honey**
- **3 tablespoons packed light-brown sugar**
- **¾ teaspoon ground cinnamon**
- **¼ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)**
- **1 teaspoon vanilla paste or extract**
- **12 ounces blended whiskey, such as Canadian Club**
- **4 ounces triple sec, such as Cointreau**
- **4 ounces fresh lemon juice, plus slices for serving**
- **Boiling-hot water and cinnamon sticks (optional), for serving**

1. In a bowl, whisk together butter, honey, brown sugar, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and vanilla until smooth. Cover; refrigerate until firm and flavors have melded, 2 hours. (If desired, transfer mixture to a piece of waxed paper or parchment and shape into a log before chilling, to slice into portions for serving.)

2. For each serving, put a generous 1 tablespoon chilled honey butter, 1½ ounces whiskey, and ½ ounce each triple sec and lemon juice in a mug. Pour 6 to 8 ounces hot water over top. Stir; garnish with lemon slices and a cinnamon stick. Serve immediately.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 2 HR. 10 MIN. | **SERVES:** 8

THE MORE, THE MERRIER

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Brown-Sugar Chocolate-Chunk Shortbread

Slicing a chilled log and re-forming it before freezing lets recipients chip off and bake just a few at a time.

- **2 sticks unsalted butter, softened**
- **¾ cup packed light-brown sugar**
- **¼ cup confectioners' sugar**
- **1 teaspoon kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)**
- **1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract**
- **2⅓ cups unbleached all-purpose flour**
- **5 ounces semisweet chocolate, finely chopped (about 1 cup)**
- **1 large egg white, beaten**
- **Sanding or turbinado sugar, for coating**

1. Beat together butter, sugars, and salt on medium speed until creamy and combined, 2 minutes. Add vanilla. Reduce speed to low, add flour, and beat to combine. Beat in chocolate. Divide dough into two pieces, each about 1 pound. Roll into logs (each about 8½ inches long and 1¾ inches in diameter). Wrap in plastic and refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours. Dough can be made to this point, well wrapped, and frozen for up to 1 month. (It can also be sliced and re-formed into logs before freezing.)

2. Remove from refrigerator or freezer (if frozen, let stand 10 minutes to soften). Brush with egg white and roll in sanding sugar to coat. Use a serrated knife and a back-and-forth motion to cut logs into ½-inch-thick slices (if any crack around larger chunks of chocolate, just press back together).

3. Preheat oven to 325°. Place cookies on parchment-lined baking sheets and bake until golden on edges, 16 to 18 minutes. Let cool on pans on wire racks 10 minutes, then transfer to racks and let cool completely, about 45 minutes. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days, or freeze up to 1 month.

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 40 MIN. **MAKES:** ABOUT 32

Easy Pistachio-Cranberry Nougat

Whole-milk powder enriches the flavor and helps this super-simple, taffy-like confection set. The bright pistachios and dried cranberries give it seasonal flair.

- **Nonstick cooking spray, for pan**
- **1 cup dry milk powder, plus more for dusting**
- **1 stick unsalted butter**
- **1 bag (10 ounces) mini marshmallows, or full-size marshmallows, cut into pieces**
- **¾ cup dried cranberries**
- **¾ cup pistachios**

1. Spray an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray; line with parchment, leaving a 2-inch overhang on two sides. Spray parchment and dust with milk powder. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add marshmallows and cook, stirring, until melted, about 2 minutes. Stir in milk powder, then cranberries and pistachios. Transfer to prepared pan, pressing or spreading to evenly fill. Lightly dust top with more milk powder. Let stand until set, at least 2 hours.

2. Use overhangs to lift nougat out of pan. Cut as desired (we made strips slightly less than ½ inch wide, then cut them in half again to create about 4-by-¾-by-½-inch pieces). Store between layers of parchment or waxed paper at room temperature in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 2 HR. 15 MIN. | **MAKES:** ABOUT 32 FOUR-INCH PLANKS

Chocolate-Dipped Dried Figs With Anise Seeds

- **16 dried figs, such as Calimyrna**
- **16 roughly ¾-inch-long pieces candied ginger (about 2 ounces total)**
- **½ cup dark melting wafers (about 2.5 ounces), such as Ghirardelli or Merckens, melted; or Tempered Chocolate (see recipe, page 104)**
- **2 teaspoons anise seeds, toasted and cooled**

Create a small slit in side of each fig; insert a piece of ginger. Dip bottoms in chocolate to come about a third of the way up sides. Sprinkle with a small amount of

anise seeds. Place on parchment-lined baking sheets and let stand until set, about 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 month.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 25 MIN.
MAKES: 16

Date Bon-Bons With Pistachio Paste

Sicilian pistachios are optimal in this recipe; they lend vibrant color and delicate flavor.

- ¼ cup pistachios, preferably Sicilian
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- Pinch of kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon orange-flower water, or almond or pistachio extract (optional)
- ½ to 1½ teaspoons vegetable oil, as needed
- 8 large dates, such as Medjool, halved lengthwise, pits removed
- 16 small slivers candied orange peel
- ⅓ cup dark melting wafers (about 2 ounces), such as Ghirardelli or Merckens, melted; or Tempered Chocolate (see recipe, page 104)

Pulse pistachios, sugar, salt, and orange-flower water together in a food processor until a fine paste forms. If necessary, add oil, ½ teaspoon at a time, to achieve a peanut-butter-like texture; you should have about ¼ cup. Fill each hollow in dates (from removing pits) with ½ teaspoon pistachio paste; stick a piece of orange peel into paste. Dip one end in chocolate. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and let stand until set, about 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 month.

ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 30 MIN.
MAKES: 16

Chocolate-and-Nut-Crusted Candied Orange

- 16 sweetened dried orange slices (available at *olivenation.com*)
- ¾ cup dark melting wafers (about 4 ounces), such as Ghirardelli or Merckens, melted; or Tempered Chocolate (see recipe, page 104)
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped roasted almonds or raw pistachios, preferably Sicilian
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped candied ginger or dried apricot

Dip half of each orange slice into chocolate; roll dipped edges in nuts and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Add a few pieces of candied ginger. Let stand until set, about 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 month.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 25 MIN.
MAKES: 16

Chocolate With Dried Fruit and Nuts (Mendiants)

- 1½ cups dark melting wafers (about 8 ounces), such as Ghirardelli or Merckens, melted; or Tempered Chocolate (see recipe, page 104)
- Assorted dried and candied fruits, such as apricots, mango, papaya, orange peel, and ginger, cut into small pieces
- Nuts, such as pistachios and roasted almonds, halved or quartered if large

1. Spoon 1-tablespoon dollops of chocolate onto parchment-lined baking sheets (you can also fill a small squeeze bottle with the chocolate and squeeze dollops onto baking sheet); bang a few times on countertop to flatten slightly. Top with a few pieces of dried fruit and a nut or two.

2. Let stand until set, about 15 minutes. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 1 month.

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 35 MIN.
MAKES: ABOUT 3 DOZEN

Espresso-Vanilla Liqueur

- 1½ cups coarsely ground espresso (from 8 ounces whole beans)
- 3 cinnamon sticks (each about 2 inches long)
- 1 bottle (750 milliliters) vodka, such as Smirnoff
- 1½ to 2½ cups Simple Syrup (recipe follows)
- 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Combine espresso, cinnamon sticks, and vodka in a large nonreactive jar; cover and let stand at room temperature 1 to 2 days. Strain through a cheesecloth-lined sieve, then through a coffee-filter-lined sieve. Stir in simple syrup to taste, then vanilla. Divide mixture among clean jars. Refrigerate up to 3 months.

ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 3 DAYS
MAKES: 4 TO 5 CUPS

Simple Syrup

- 2 cups sugar

In a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, stir together sugar and 2 cups water. Cook, stirring, until sugar has dissolved and mixture comes to a boil. Let cool completely, then refrigerate in an airtight container up to 2 weeks.

ACTIVE TIME: 5 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 5 MIN., PLUS COOLING | **MAKES:** ABOUT 3 CUPS

Kumquat-Tangerine Liqueur

- 3 lemons
- 3 tangerines
- 1¼ cups kumquats, halved
- 1 bottle (750 milliliters) vodka, such as Smirnoff
- 1½ to 2½ cups Simple Syrup (see recipe, left)

1. Peel strips of zest from lemons and tangerines with a vegetable peeler, avoiding white pith; reserve fruit for another use. Put zest, kumquats, and vodka in a large nonreactive jar; cover and let stand at room temperature 2 to 3 days. Stir in simple syrup to taste. Refrigerate 1 day.

2. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve, reserving some fruit for garnish, if desired. Divide among clean jars. Add some soaked fruit or strips of zest, if desired. Refrigerate up to 3 months.

ACTIVE TIME: 20 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 3 DAYS
MAKES: 5 TO 6 CUPS

Cherry-Cinnamon Liqueur

- 3 cups fresh or frozen sweet or tart cherries (1 pound), or a combination, or cherries and cranberries (we used Wyman's Dark Sweet & Red Tart cherries)
- 3 cinnamon sticks (each about 2 inches long)
- 1 bottle (750 milliliters) vodka, such as Smirnoff
- 1½ to 2½ cups Simple Syrup (see recipe, left)
- ¼ teaspoon almond extract (optional)

Combine cherries, cinnamon sticks, and vodka in a large nonreactive jar. Cover and let stand at room temperature 2 to 3 days. Strain through a fine-mesh sieve, reserving fruit. Stir in simple syrup and almond extract to taste. Divide among clean jars. Add some of reserved fruit, if desired. (Remaining cherries can be refrigerated up to 1 month; send a small jar of extras along with the liqueur, or save them for yourself—they're great in Manhattans!) Refrigerate up to 3 months.

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 3 DAYS
MAKES: 5 TO 6 CUPS

The Workbook

Peanut-Popcorn Balls

- **14 cups popped popcorn (from ½ cup kernels)**
- **4 tablespoons unsalted butter**
- **1¼ cups packed light-brown sugar**
- **⅓ cup light corn syrup**
- **2 tablespoons unsulfured molasses**
- **2 teaspoons kosher salt (we use Diamond Crystal)**
- **¼ teaspoon baking soda**
- **1 cup roasted red-skinned salted peanuts or cocktail peanuts**
- **Vegetable-oil cooking spray, for gloves**

1. Preheat oven to 225°. Place popcorn in a large bowl. Melt butter in a medium heavy saucepan over medium heat. Stir in brown sugar and corn syrup; cook, stirring occasionally, until thoroughly combined. Increase heat to high; bring to a boil without stirring. Cook until mixture registers 245° to 248° on a candy thermometer, 2 to 4 minutes. Turn off heat; stir in molasses, salt, and baking soda to completely combine. Keep stirring until mixture turns very foamy and lightens in color and bubbles up quite a bit.

2. Pour hot syrup over popcorn mixture and immediately sprinkle peanuts over top; stir until all kernels and nuts are coated. Let stand briefly. Meanwhile, put on a pair of rubber gloves and spray them with cooking spray (this isn't required, but it will help protect your hands from the heat, and it's important to work while the mixture is still warm).

3. Working quickly, use your hands to form mixture into balls, each about 1 cup in volume (if you have a 1-cup scoop, use that!). Transfer balls to a parchment-lined baking sheet. Once all have been formed, go back and use your hands to press them into tighter balls, so they really hold together. Let stand 15 minutes.

4. Bake 45 minutes. (If one or two balls fall apart during baking, let cool briefly, then re-form.) Let cool completely. Store in an airtight container at room temperature up to 2 weeks.

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN. | **TOTAL TIME:** 1 HR. 10 MIN., PLUS COOLING | **MAKES:** 14

GOOD THINGS

PAGE 17

HOW-TO

Seedpod Ornaments

SUPPLIES

- **Dried seedpods and other natural materials**
- **Silver spray paint**
- **Silver wire, 20 gauge**
- **Craft adhesive, such as E6000**

1. Spray each natural item with a coat of silver paint; let dry about 10 minutes. Flip each over and spray-paint again; let dry about 10 minutes. Repeat, making sure to paint from different angles if your materials have lots of nooks and crannies.

2. To re-create our maleberry-pod ornament (second from top left on page 17), glue several maleberry pods together in descending size using craft adhesive.

3. Cut a short piece of silver wire; bend one end into a hook. Push straight end of wire into your item; secure with craft adhesive.

THE DETAILS: Sweetgum seedpods, *$5.25 for 50, forestwitchery.etsy.com.* **White-oak acorns,** *$15 for 10, outside theboxshops.etsy.com.* **Dried sponge mushrooms,** *$10 for 6 to 7 stems, dried decor.com.* **Ashland dried lotus pods** *(includes maleberry pods), $12 for a 7"-by-7" box, michaels.com.* **Norway spruce pinecones,** *$6 for 6, new hampshirenature.etsy.com.* **Dried poppy-pods bunch,** *$22 for 10 stems, petaldriven.com.* **Artistic Wire,** *20 gauge, in Silver, $6.50 for 6 yd., michaels.com.*

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—Martha

PHOTOGRAPH BY CHRISTOPHER BAKER

From the December 1999 issue

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